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THE

MORAL TENDENCY

OF

DIVINE REVELATION

ASSERTED AND ILLUSTRATED,

IN

EIGHT DISCOURSES

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD IN THE YEAR MDCCCXXI,

At the Lecture founded by

THE LATE REV. JOHN BAMPTON, M. A.

CANON OF SALISBURY.

BY THE

REV. JOHN JONES, M. A.

OF JESUS COLLEGE,

ARCHDEACON OF MERIONETH, AND RECTOR OF LLANBEDR.

Κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἌΓΙΟΝ, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἌΓΙΟΙ ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε. 1 Petr. i. 15.

OXFORD,

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS FOR THE AUTHOR.

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1821.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

AND REVEREND

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

AND

HEADS OF COLLEGES

IN

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

THESE LECTURES,

PREACHED BY THEIR APPOINTMENT,

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR

FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

EXTRACT

FROM

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,

CANON OF SALISBURY.

—— "I give and bequeath my Lands and Estates "to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the Uni- "versity of Oxford for ever, to have and to hold all and "singular the said Lands or Estates upon trust, and to "the intents and purposes hereinafter mentioned; that "is to say, I will and appoint that the Vice-Chancellor "of the University of Oxford for the time being shall "take and receive all the rents, issues, and profits there- "of, and (after all taxes, reparations, and necessary de- "ductions made) that he pay all the remainder to the "endowment of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be "established for ever in the said University, and to be "performed in the manner following:

"I direct and appoint, that, upon the first Tuesday in "Easter Term, a Lecturer be yearly chosen by the "Heads of Colleges only, and by no others, in the room "adjoining to the Printing-House, between the hours of "ten in the morning and two in the afternoon, to preach "eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year following, at "St. Mary's in Oxford, between the commencement of "the last month in Lent Term, and the end of the third "week in Act Term.

"Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity "Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either of the "following Subjects—to confirm and establish the Chris- "tian Faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics "—upon the divine authority of the holy Scriptures— "upon the authority of the writings of the primitive Fa- "thers, as to the faith and practice of the primitive "Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour "Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost— "upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as compre- "hended in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

"Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Di- "vinity Lecture Sermons shall be always printed, within "two months after they are preached, and one copy "shall be given to the Chancellor of the University, and "one copy to the Head of every College, and one copy "to the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one copy to "be put into the Bodleian Library; and the expense of "printing them shall be paid out of the revenue of the "Land or Estates given for establishing the Divinity "Lecture Sermons; and the Preacher shall not be paid, "nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are printed.

"Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be "qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, un- "less he hath taken the degree of Master of Arts at "least, in one of the two Universities of Oxford or Cam- "bridge; and that the same person shall never preach "the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice."

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PREFACE.

THE following Discourses will be found somewhat longer, as they come from the press, than they were as delivered from the pulpit. They now appear, with a few alterations, as they were originally composed. Whether in thus retaining what I had at first written, I have judged wisely or not, is freely submitted to the reader's decision; but to myself it appeared necessary to the due illustration of my design.

In the present state of theological controversy, there are two opposite errors, against which I would seriously warn the young student to be upon his guard. The first is, a disregard to the obligations of morality, arising from an injudicious zeal

to magnify the grace of the Gospel; the second is, an apparent lessening of the value of that grace, by assigning too much weight to human virtue in the attainment of salvation. And in order effectually to prevent both these errors, it seems necessary to lay down the two following principles, as axioms, to which the mind may always recur in judging of the opinions which are offered to its acceptance. First, that the obligation of man to serve God in all the duties of piety, righteousness, and sobriety, is eternal and indispensable, bound upon him at his creation by the law of his nature, and not to be infringed or diminished at any subsequent period of his existence: secondly, that "eternal life is the *gift* of "God through Jesus Christ," to which no man has any claim of merit, and of which, whoever becomes a partaker, owes his participation of so great a benefit solely to the undeserved mercy of God electing him to

so inestimable a blessing. When these two principles have been well fixed in the mind, they will, I conceive, tend greatly to preserve the young theologian from any material mistake in the disputes which now divide the Christian world, which indeed always have divided it, and which, from their importance, will in all probability continue to disturb it, till we see in "the consum-"mation of all things" the perfect justice and consistency of all the Divine proceedings.

I have on this occasion purposely abstained from the use of those names of distinction, which are so much abused by all parties among us, and which frequently conceal an utter ignorance of the matters in debate, and are too often mere terms of mutual and uncharitable reproach. I would beg leave indeed to recommend it as a very useful help to correct thinking, that every

point of doctrine should be considered as it is in itself; that it should not be called by this name or the other; but being accurately stated, and clearly defined, that it should be brought in its own precise sense to the test of God's word, and received or rejected according to its agreement or disagreement with that infallible standard. This would at least prevent all rash censures, and the adoption of crude, half-formed opinions. At present, I am apprehensive, that much mischief is occasioned by the want of this particular investigation. Young men, hearing frequently the condemnation of certain opinions under a certain name, and carrying away perhaps little besides the name, think themselves quite sure of the truth, provided they keep at a sufficient distance from the errors which the world in general has attached to that name; while in fact of the opinions themselves they know little, and must con-

tinue to know little, till they have been better instructed in the elements of theological learning, and more largely and deeply versed in that which is peculiarly the study of divinity.

If, by the blessing of God, the ensuing work should be so far of use, as to give any candidate for the holy ministry, or any one of my younger brethren, a more correct view of the design and tendency of the sacred oracles, it will be an ample reward for the time and pains I have bestowed upon it, in circumstances not altogether suited for such an undertaking: if not, it shall be my earnest prayer to the Almighty, that they may meet with a better guide of their opinions, and be preserved by some better means from falling into errors, too prevalent not to be dangerous, and too dangerous not to fill every friend of truth and virtue with alarm.

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SERMON I.

PSALM lxxiv. 22.

Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.

THAT it has pleased Almighty God to reveal his will to mankind, "at sundry "times and in divers manners[a]," is a truth clearly proved by the most direct evidence, of which such a subject is capable. He who denies this must, to be consistent with himself, disbelieve every thing which is not an immediate object of his senses. To him the page of history is a blank. All the important records of past ages, all the bright examples of virtue which they exhibit, and all the clear warnings against vice, which they hold out in the various instances of its punishment, are to him as if they were

[a] Heb. i. 1.

not; they neither enlighten his understanding nor interest his affections. Nay, even modern events, and the eminent characters of the age in which he lives, are to him equally lost. His ideas are alike confined in space as in time. Rejecting, as he does, credible testimony, the only evidence of which past actions and remote occurrences are capable, he is necessarily circumscribed within the narrow sphere of his own unassisted observation; he knows nothing, at least in reason he should not profess to know any thing, beyond that poor pittance of information with which his own eyes and ears and hands supply him; and being himself but the creature of a day, he must inevitably perish in an unprofitable ignorance, uninstructed by the wisdom of his ancestors, and having no hope of benefiting his posterity. Useless alike to all his kind, he sinks, unblessing and unblessed, into the fathomless abyss of perdition. Few indeed, if any, of those, who have perversely withstood the evidence of revelation, have chosen to be thus consistent with themselves; they have claimed a right,

most unfairly, of acting in regard to religion by a different set of principles[b] from those which guide men in the ordinary affairs of life; and the gross inconsistency of this conduct has proved, that their objection to revealed religion was derived from a source which had little connection with the deficiency of its evidence. They were "partial[c]" in their minds; and while they admitted upon slight grounds what their inclination was not averse to[d], they would not allow any weight to the strongest testimony, when brought in support of what they had already looked upon with an unfavourable eye. The same evidence has been in one case received without hesitation, and in another, to which it was equally applicable, rejected with inflexible pertinacity. A strange perverseness this,

[b] Quæ est igitur ista philosophia, quæ communi more in foro loquitur, in libellis suo? *Cicero De Fin.* lib. ii. 24. iv. 8.

[c] James ii. 4.

[d] Bishop Wilkins's Principles of Natural Religion, p. 20, &c. Dr. Webster's Discourse on the Duty of Preaching the whole Law, in Weekly Miscellany. Butler's Analogy, p. ii. c. 6.

surely, and a present proof, how much the human mind has fallen from its original uprightness and integrity! For looking at the subject independently of all testimony in its favour, Divine Revelation seems to be peculiarly entitled to a ready admission into the mind of man, because nothing seems more natural, than that God should make some revelation of himself. Supposing that he is, and that he stands in the relation of a Creator to mankind, it follows as a necessary consequence of that relation, that man derives from Him all the faculties which he possesses, and owes Him all the duty which by his nature he is capable of performing. There can therefore be no difficulty in conceiving, that He, who endued the soul and the body with every sense and every power, should be able to reveal his Will to the work of his own hands in any way which to Him may appear best: nor ought there to be any greater difficulty in allowing, that what has appeared best to Him must be best in itself. And as the probability of a Revelation is thus easily admissible in regard to God, so with re-

spect to man, there is, from his very nature and condition, a clear necessity for some divine interference in his behalf. As a creature, he is, no doubt, bound to perform any duty which his Creator may require of him. But how shall he know what that duty is? By a revelation of some sort, most assuredly, though it should not immediately appear in what form or by what instrument the necessary communications have been made. For whether we suppose, that correct notions of duty were originally impressed upon the mind, and became manifest as the reasoning power acquired strength and maturity; or acknowledge, what is much more probable, that instruction in righteousness was imparted immediately from heaven by the audible voice of a Divine Teacher, it would be equally Revelation, equally derived from the Almighty Father of mankind, and a direct manifestation of his Will by Himself. If indeed man be considered as an independent being, if he have received nothing from any higher power, and owe no duty to any above him, we may readily grant,

that as no revelation would be necessary, so none would be rationally credible. But that any, who acknowledge a God, and that man is his creature, dependent upon Him and bound to Him in every possible sense and manner, should yet make a difficulty of believing, that the Will, which he is formed to obey, has been revealed to him, is indeed most unaccountable; such men should end the climax of their folly in the madness of Atheism. What the Will of God is, can surely be known with certainty only from God himself; and as in whatever way it may please Him to make it known it must be acknowledged to be a revelation, this must necessarily remove all antecedent objections on this subject, and leave any particular form of revelation as capable of being proved by suitable evidence, as any other matter in which mankind are concerned.

The question then in fairness does not appear to be, whether God has or has not revealed his Will to man; it is evident that He has, because there is seen an absolute necessity that He should, and because there

is no assignable reason why He should not: but, amongst all the revelations which pretend to be derived from Him, which is in truth entitled to the respect and obedience due to a direct communication from the Fountain, no less of Wisdom than of Power. That there are many which lay claim to this character is obvious; rather indeed is it matter of historical record, that all forms of religion profess to found themselves on the sanction of a supernatural authority. And why so? Because the authors of these different forms, though wholly unconnected with each other, yet conspired to mock and delude those who confided in them? No; but because they knew[e], that the mind of man, either from natural constitution, or from traditionary instruction, admitted most readily the necessity of God's interference in guiding his creatures to the attainment of religious truth. And, in fact, the very existence of pretended revelations is a clear proof that there must have been one that was true.

[e] Bishop Wilkins, p. 346. Dr. Rogers on the Necessity of a Divine Revelation, Sermon i. p. 22.

However humiliating it may be to human ingenuity, and however common it is to talk of human inventions, it is yet indisputable, that man is not capable of inventing[f] any thing of which there is not some real prototype existing in nature. He cannot form the most distant conception of what a sixth sense would be; nor, had he been endued with four only, could he have had the least notion of the fifth. He may now indeed exercise those faculties, which by the help of a little self-flattery may be called inventive, and he may join, in forming the creatures of his fancy, the five senses which he possesses into many monstrous combinations, or by bestowing them partially, present to his mind's eye numerous objects with defective organs: but he can do no more than copy what has been laid before him; however strange and out of nature the whole may be, the particulars will be found mere imitations of

[f] I use the word *inventing* here not in its strict sense of discovering what exists, but according to the more lax idea, annexed to it in common conversation, for the production of something which never existed before.

what he has become acquainted with, by the "hearing ear and the seeing eye[g]," which his Maker has bestowed upon him. This is the utmost stretch of human ingenuity; but to form an idea, which shall be perfectly new in all its parts, as well as in its complex character, is an effort beyond its power. When therefore any idea is received by the mind of man, we may be certain, that there is something in existence answerable to that idea, not perhaps taken as a whole, but as to the parts of which it is composed. The combinations themselves are often the most monstrous and absurd that can be conceived, but the particulars are mere copies from real nature. Thus nothing could be more vile or unnatural than the representations of the Deity, which were made in the times of heathen ignorance, and which indeed must be wholly referred to human depravity or diabolical suggestion; but the parts of this impious combination had a real existence in nature, or man could never have put them together. Had there been no God,

[g] Prov. xx. 12.

the idea of a God had never obtained in the world[h]; and what is more, even of the reptile, by which he was so unworthily re-

[h] Cudworth's Intellect. System, c. iv. p. 694. "But "some Atheists will yet further reply, that there is a "*feigning* power in the human soul, whereby it can "frame ideas or conceptions of such things, as actually "never were nor will be, as of a Centaur or of a golden "mountain: and that by such a *feigning power* as this, "the idea of God, though there be no such thing ex- "isting, might be framed. And here we deny not, but "that the human soul hath a power of confounding "ideas and things together, which exist severally and "apart in nature, but never were nor will be in that "conjunction; and this indeed is all the *feigning power* "that it hath. For the mind cannot make any *new co-* "*gitation*, which was not before, but only compound "that which is. As the painter cannot feign colours, "but must use such as exist in nature; only he can va- "riously compound them together, and by his pencil "draw the figures and lineaments of such things as no "where are; as he can add to the head and face of a "man, the neck, shoulders, and body of a horse. In "like manner that more subtle painter or limner, the "mind and imagination of man, can frame compounded "ideas of things which no where exist, but yet his "single colours notwithstanding must be real; he can- "not feign any cogitation which was not in nature, nor "make a positive conception of that which is abso- "lutely nothing, which were no less than to make no- "thing to be something, or create something out of "nothing."

presented, man could have had no notion by the mere exercise of his own ingenuity. It is therefore most evidently clear, that false religions and pretended revelations prove the existence of a true religion, derived from a real revelation, because man could never have invented either. He could copy indeed, and unhappily he could corrupt and pervert, but he could not invent; and had it never pleased God to reveal Himself, no idea of a revelation would ever have been formed by men. And this should teach them, if they had any modesty or humility, not only to receive with thankfulness those higher communications of divine truth with which the word of God abounds, but to read with reverence the accounts of those instructions in things of a more familiar nature, which may now appear not so suitable to the Majesty of the Omnipotent. If at any time we are offended with these things, the cause of offence is in ourselves, in our own pride and ignorance. We have now enjoyed the glorious light of the Gospel for so long a time, we have been so long accustomed to

the arts and refined conveniences of social life, that we do not appreciate as we ought the difficulty of their first introduction amongst a race of degenerate beings. When we read, that the Almighty made a covering to hide the nakedness of his polluted creature, we do not perhaps always feel the value of this divine condescension. Judging from the subsequent history of the human race, we may fairly conclude, that our unhappy parents, though at the time not insensible of the disgrace they had incurred, would soon have learned to acquiesce in their debased condition, and to "glory in their shame." Guilt made them fear to face their Almighty Creator; but habit would have made vice familiar, and the restraints of modesty and conscience would have lost their hold upon their minds. Fallen from their high estate of purity and perfection, they would most probably, if left to themselves, have sunk into a savage wildness, and herded with the brutes that surrounded them. The mercy of God alone preserved them from further degradation; the mercy of God alone

taught them to recover in some degree that decency, which a sense of sin no longer permitted them to preserve on the terms of their original creation. It was indeed little to be expected, that he, who in his first strength of righteousness and perfection could not withstand the allurement of sin, should in his weakness and pollution invent the means of his own recovery. Nor would any one of his descendants ever have succeeded any better. To improve upon an idea of which we are already in possession, and originally to strike out that idea, are two very different things; and though it should be granted, that some of the more eminent among the children of Adam have done something not altogether despicable in the former, in the latter they have confessedly done nothing. In fact, nothing was left them to do. Revelation has ever been the sole source of truth[i], while falsehood owes its being to the perversions and the wanderings of human ingenuity. Not only the sacred records of revelation itself,

[i] Octav. p. 52. Lactant. De Origine Erroris.

but profane history assures us of this; the march of all true knowledge[k] is traced with clearness and certainty from those countries which were properly the cradle of the human race. Thence it was derived at first, and thence was the renovation of it sought when it had been lost or obscured by the degeneracy of man. And this is a proof that man was originally perfect; because the nearer he is traced to his original in time and place, the more free he seems to be from falsehood and from sin. Left to himself, it is clear, that in his present condition he has a continual tendency to degenerate, and gradually to sink to a level with "the beasts that perish[l]" both in knowledge and practice. The further he has been removed from the sources of communication with his Maker, the weaker have been his impressions of right and wrong, and the more gross his conceptions

[k] Josephus contra Apion. Dr. Cudworth's Intellectual System, p. 308. and particularly his account of the Egyptian Learning, p. 311. See also Bryant's Preface to Observations on the Plagues of Egypt.

[l] Psalm xlix. 12.

of the Deity. Every succeeding generation added something to the corruption of their fathers, and diminished something from the purity of their religious principles. It was only by those manifestations of his will, which the Almighty made from time to time, and by which He recalled his creatures to their allegiance, when they had rebelled against his authority, and wandered from his fold, that mankind were prevented from losing every trace of their original uprightness. That he did thus frequently recall them, an attentive perusal of the records of past ages will sufficiently evince. The Scripture history marks with great precision[m] the several occasions on

[m] Prideaux's Connection, anno 277 and 63. See also a Sermon on the Fulness of Time, by the Rev. W. Cleaver. Amidst all the confusion and obscurity in which the ancient history of nations is involved, this however is evident, that the Greeks, who became so famous for learning, derived their first instructions in that learning from foreign sources. The rudiments of knowledge were imported from Egypt and Phœnicia into the country, which afterwards affected to consider the rest of mankind as barbarous, and thither did all those travel in search of wisdom, who wished to attain any profound acquaintance with the nature and origin of

which our heavenly Father interfered to check the progress of depravity, and to

things. At home they met with nothing that bore the stamp of genuine antiquity. The assertion of Josephus against Apion is indisputable, and to an extent beyond what he has stated: Πάντων δὲ νεωτάτη σχεδόν ἐστι παρ' αὐτοῖς ἡ περὶ τοῦ συγγράφειν τὰς ἱστορίας ἐπιμέλεια, τὰ μέντοι παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις τε καὶ Χαλδαίοις καὶ Φοίνιξιν· ἐῶ γὰρ νῦν ἡμᾶς ἐκείνοις συγκαταλέγειν· αὐτοὶ δήπουθεν ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀρχαιοτάτην τε καὶ μονιμωτάτην ἔχειν τῆς μνήμης τὴν παράδοσιν. Though when they did begin to cultivate literature they excelled all that went before them among the philosophers of the heathens, yet, as they began late, so was it evident that they had been indebted to masters and instructors. The learned Dr. Cudworth has traced the progress of philosophical opinion and historical record among the Pagan literati with prodigious industry and success, and the result of his researches clearly proves, that knowledge had the same origin as the human race itself. Orpheus, Thales, Pherecydes, and Pythagoras, were the great instructors of the heathen world in theology and morals, and they had been themselves instructed by those who went before them. It is puerile to consider these as the inventors of the truths they taught, merely because Pagan history, confessedly so novel and imperfect, cannot trace them higher. What real truth they had, they derived from their better taught forefathers; the mixture of error was the work of later times. And the same is to be said of the Egyptian Thoth, or Hermes Trismegistus. He delivered, amongst much rubbish of human error, much solid truth, which had come down to him from those who knew God, and the spiritual excellency of his nature:

prevent a forgetfulness of Himself among men; nor did He give up any part of them

but because they, who wrote of this eminent instructor, could not penetrate the obscurity in which his history was involved, it does not follow that he invented the instructions ascribed to him: it might as well be supposed, on the same ground, that he was the father of mankind. The real source of truth among the heathens was tradition, handed down from father to son, and commencing after the flood with Noah, who was righteous before God, and knew the attributes of his Maker; the real source of error was the grossness of the human mind after its corruption, and its continual tendency to clothe the object of its worship in flesh, and thus make it subject to sense. On this ground, the mixture of truth and error in the Pagan mythology is most plainly accounted for; whereas any hypothesis, which would assign the invention of truth to human ingenuity, after it had been lost, is directly in the teeth of all the history with which we are acquainted. As far as that history goes, it traces the progress of knowledge accurately, and when it stops, its silence ought not to be supplied by vague conjecture. When therefore the ancient fathers prove, that the earliest and best philosophers maintained the unity of the Godhead, and had worthy ideas of His spirituality and omnipotence, their intention is to show that the objection to Christianity as a new religion was unfounded, that truth was before error, and that nothing but human depravity had introduced confusion, disorder, and falsehood into that knowledge which had been originally imparted to man. It is indeed wonderful to think, how the idea of one Almighty God kept possession of men's minds even in

"to a reprobate mind[n]," till it appeared clearly, that "they did not like to retain

the midst of all their gross superstitions. Minucius Felix and Lactantius assure us however that so it was. "Eloquar quemadmodum sentio," says the former, "magnitudinem Dei qui se putat nosse, minuit; qui "non vult minuere, non novit: nec nomen Deo quæ- "ras. Deus nomen est: illic vocabulis opus est, cum "per singulos propriis appellationum insignibus multi- "tudo dirimenda est.....Aufer additamenta nominum "et perspicies ejus claritatem. Quid quod omnium de "isto habeo consensum? Audio vulgus, cum ad cœlum "manus tendunt, nihil aliud quam Deum dicunt, et "Deus magnus est, et Deus verus est, et si Deus dede- "rit: vulgi iste naturalis sermo est, an Christiani con- "fitentis oratio?—Audio poetas quoque unum patrem "divûm atque hominum prædicantes.—Recenseamus, "si placet, disciplinam philosophorum, deprehendes "eos, etsi sermonibus variis, ipsis tamen rebus in hanc "unam coire et conspirare sententiam.....Sit Thales "Milesius omnium primus, qui primus omnium de cœ- "lestibus disputavit: idem Milesius Thales rerum ini- "tium aquam dixit, Deum autem eam mentem quæ ex "aquâ cuncta formaverit. Eho, altior et sublimior "aquæ et Spiritus ratio quam ut ab homine potuerit in- "veniri; *a Deo traditum.* Vides philosophi principalis "nobiscum penitus opinionem consonare." It seems extraordinary that this point should not have been more attended to than it appears to have been; for the occasions on which Almighty God interfered to spread or to preserve a knowledge of himself in the world are very observable. The call of Abraham was within such a

[n] Rom. i. 28.

"Him in their knowledge." And reason surely would teach us, that it must be so.

time after the flood as to be a powerful check to the idolatry which could then be only commencing, and a correction of such moral delinquencies as were beginning to be prevalent among men. That in his age there was a knowledge and a fear of the One Supreme God, of sufficient power to restrain the commission of sin, is evident from his intercourse with the kings of Gerar and Egypt; and the sojourning of himself, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, with their descendants, in the latter country, was admirably adapted to prevent that knowledge and fear from being so soon lost. Egypt was then probably more advanced in learning than any part of the world, and it was to become afterwards the school of learning to those, who to this day continue the masters of mankind in human literature. It was then surely a proof of Divine goodness and providence, that his first interference after the deluge should be so arranged as to make that country in a great measure the theatre in which the instruments of that interference had so long their abode, and on which were displayed so many of the miracles which were necessary for its support. Egypt, knowing Almighty God in the days of Abraham, must have been wholly without excuse, if, after the miraculous salvation of the country by Joseph, it had lost all knowledge of Him in the time of Moses. And it is probable that it had not; for though the heart of the King was hardened, yet many among his subjects, and especially the priests, might have retained something of that better theology. But if it had, the miracles of Moses were well calculated to impress them with a holy awe, and to revive the memory of

If man was originally made by God, it must be no less true, that he was originally taught by the same Divine Being. And He who at first taught man, and endowed him with the capacity of understanding what he was taught, could alone restore his knowledge, if at any time he should have lost or corrupted it. Men of learning, in their disquisitions on this subject, have

what they had so unworthily forgotten. But it was not with Egypt alone that the Jewish nation had intercourse, nor was that country alone enlightened by its prophets. All the great monarchies of the world were brought in contact with the people of God; and if they would not learn their wisdom, it was not for want of the means of being acquainted with it. The captivity of Israel made the God of Israel known by several special edicts to the nations and languages that owned the sway of the Assyrian and Persian kings. The meeting of Alexander and the High Priest Jaddua is related at large by Josephus, lib. xi. c. 8. Not long after this, a Greek translation was made of the Old Testament at Alexandria, and might have got into general use by the resort of learned men to the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus. By the Romans the Jewish polity and religion might have been thoroughly examined, had not their pride made them contemn a people confined to so small a territory; though the reverse experienced by their celebrated Pompey, after his sacrilegious entrance into the Jewish Temple, might have taught them that the God of the Jews was the Ruler of the world.

sometimes appeared to forget, that man is a creature, and a dependent creature; and have seemed to argue about his natural powers, as if he had something of his own which he had not received. But it requires, one would think, but little acuteness to discern, and little modesty to acknowledge, that a mere creature can only be that which its Creator has been pleased to make it; and experience too sadly proves, that what man has of his own is only vice and ignorance. Unrestrained by law, and undisciplined by education, and unenlightened by a revelation of his Maker's Will, he would be carried away by his passions, and fall an easy prey to the vilest affections. When the heathen poets made the first the golden age of the world, they did well; or rather, they retained with some fidelity the tradition which informed them, that man's original state was one of righteousness, purity, and peace, and that having fallen from that state, he afterwards became continually worse, immersed in deeper ignorance, and more entirely lost to every better feeling of his nature.

If this then be a just account of the state of man; if he must, as a creature, have originally derived all his knowledge in religion and morals from the instructions of his Creator; and if it plainly appears, as it surely does, that the Almighty has all along prevented his total depravity, and assisted his recovery by frequent manifestations of his Will; it must doubtless be acknowledged to be both his interest and his duty to attend to those manifestations, and to endeavour, as much as in him lies, rightly to understand and faithfully to follow their directions. For it is evident, in this view, that the manifestation of the Divine Will is the only sure guide to man, whereby he may recover his lost uprightness, and be restored to his lost happiness. And it is evident also, that the purpose of God in making such a manifestation was thus to guide him. To perform the Will of God was his first duty as a creature; and as the performance of that duty was an indispensable condition of his retaining the happiness with which he had been endowed, there could not be a more important object to

him than to know what that Will was, on his obedience to which so much depended. How to please Almighty God, was to man, while he retained any thing like a due sense of the relation in which he stood to his Maker, the most concerning question that could occupy his mind. And upon this momentous question his Creator never left him in doubt; he afforded him from the first the most satisfactory information as to the conduct which would alone be acceptable in his sight. Man was, in the strictest propriety of speech, "taught of God[o]," taught what he was to do in order to obey the law of his Creator, and to secure his own happiness. Had he strictly attended to the instructions which he received, he would have fulfilled his duty, and preserved himself. The performance of his duty was necessary to that preservation; and the Almighty, by teaching him the one, had afforded him the means of securing the other. But the great point to be considered is this; that when God condescended to teach man, what He taught him was his

[o] John vi. 45.

duty, the rules which he was bound to observe, and the precepts to which his obedience was necessary. To man indeed this was the best knowledge, because it was the best means of securing his happiness; and God has especially commended it to his attention by making it the great object of his own gracious instructions. Divine Revelation has ever had a moral tendency; it has ever had for its object, either to retain man in his original uprightness, or to recover him from the pollution he had contracted. It never was a mere communication of speculative science, nor an arbitrary imposition of useless precepts; it had ever a regard to practical duty, to form the manners of man so as best to advance his improvement in piety and virtue. This point is capable of the clearest demonstration by impartially examining that Revelation, which alone is supported by evidence, and which alone is worthy of support, in which God himself has condescended to "plead his own cause," and to repel the "reproaches of the foolish," the insinuations of the crafty, and the daring blasphe-

mies of shameless depravity. It is my present intention to enter upon that examination, and to show, by an induction of particulars, that it was plainly the design of the Almighty, in revealing his Will to man, to teach him the way of righteousness, and to direct him to walk therein, to deter him from vice, and to show him how inconsistent it is, not only with the obedience due to his Creator, but with his own nature, with the perfection for which it was designed, and of which it was capable. This indeed is so obvious, and the declarations to this effect in sacred writ are so frequent and so express, that it may seem perhaps to require some apology for my presuming so far upon the patience of my present hearers, as to introduce before them a view of this subject, the plainness and simplicity of which, the least exercised in theological studies must at once perceive and acknowledge. Would to God that such were indeed the case! would to God that there were no occasion to insist, in the way of controversy at least, upon the necessity of obedience to the Divine Law, and to illus-

trate the moral tendency of God's word! But man continually bears the strongest testimony to the account of his fall, by corrupting and perverting every good with which the Divine Mercy has entrusted him. It might appear no doubt an unreasonable thing in speculation, to suppose, that any man or set of men could so far mistake or pervert the intentions of God, in his communications to the human race, as not to confess, that they must be designed to correct what is amiss, and to improve what is right amongst them, and that no less in moral practice than in matter of opinion. The holiness of God, his immaculate purity and perfect righteousness, might have been a sufficient security, that nothing coming from Him could do less than promote the same holiness and purity and righteousness amongst his creatures, as far as they were capable of following the heavenly pattern He should set before them. Even had there been no express declaration in favour of these virtues, and no express precept to enjoin them, still a Revelation from Him, who is infinite as well in

truth and righteousness as in power, would of necessity have been stamped with a character conformable to that of its Author. But when it is considered, that every page of that Revelation teems with attestations to the indispensable necessity of virtue; when it is plainly told us, that as essential holiness is the perfection of God, so a derived holiness is the perfection of man; when in the history of our unhappy degradation we see clearly, that sin alone caused a separation between man and his Maker, and that there can be no restoration to His favour without a restoration to holiness; and when we meditate with due attention upon the means, which have been supplied both in the Law and the Gospel, for the effecting of that restoration, it must appear an extraordinary proof of human weakness or wickedness, should a Revelation thus circumstanced not be understood as imposing the strongest obligation to rectitude of conduct in every possible respect. Yet so it has been. Neither the flaming sword set to guard the Tree of Life, nor the burning terrors of Sinai, nor the clear

though mild declarations of the Preacher on the Mount, have been able to secure the revelations of Heaven from being made subservient to the errors and the vices of men. Scarcely indeed is there any error or any vice, which has not at one time or other sought to sanction its enormity by some unhappy perversion of revealed truth. Doctrines have been taught, as contained in the Book of God, completely at variance with all moral obligation, and at once derogatory to His righteousness, and subversive of human virtue. This is attested by the whole current of that history which has informed us of the manner in which man has received the instructions of his Maker, and which in truth is frequently nothing but an account of the various misrepresentations to which the sacred Oracles have been subjected since they were first promulgated to the world. The ingenious subtleties of philosophy, and the wild fictions of poetic fancy, were equally employed in polluting that small stream of traditionary instruction, which, had it run clear, would have given men a correct, though a

faint view of their origin and their duty. But the philosophers and the poets of Paganism may perhaps be excused, from the difficulties by which they were surrounded; a greater guilt and a greater misery must assuredly fall upon those, who have corrupted even the plainest testimonies of God's written word. The scepticism of the Sadducee, and the hypocrisy of the Pharisee, the uncleanness of the Nicolaitan, the ungovernable anarchy of the early Anabaptist, and the direct encouragement to wickedness afforded by the principles of the Antinomian, together with those ever varying shades of error by which vice would fain conceal some part of its deformity, seek each of them to support itself by a pretended regard to that word, which, in its design and in its form, is most clearly opposed to them all. But unhappy as this is, it ought neither to surprise nor disturb us. The cause is deeply seated in the human heart, and in that corruption with which it is so evidently tinctured. Man has so much of his original uprightness remaining in him, that with Religion generally he

feels himself inclined to close, as that which is most congenial to the natural impressions of his mind. Perhaps there is no man, however little he may appear to respect Religion in his conduct, who has not yet some idea of it in his own mind, on which he relies, as giving him a hope, faint indeed and undefined, of ultimate reconciliation with his Maker. A naked barefaced denial of all obligation to regard God in any way or degree, is a pitch of depravity to which the soul of man rarely attains, and from which it is naturally abhorrent. But though some sense of Religion be thus readily entertained by the mind, it is no less obvious, that it entertains as readily a host of tumultuous passions and unruly appetites, which demand gratification without control, and whose gratification is utterly inconsistent with a real regard to religious truth. What then is to be done? How shall the mind, thus pressed on both sides by duty and passion, preserve itself in tranquillity, without positively renouncing the one or the other? It might be supposed, that with the express declarations of Scrip-

ture against vice, and the strong feeling of the mind itself in favour of Religion on the one hand, and the violent cravings of passion on the other, the soul must at once resolve, either to give up the indulgence of its appetites, or boldly deny the faith that restrains them. The fact is quite the reverse. Men in general will do neither; and they have done neither from the time when their first parent introduced sin into the world by transgressing the commandment of his God. They will neither part with their Religion, nor restrain their appetites; but they will exert their best skill and ability to make them agree, and, by every art of sophistical ingenuity, pervert the principles of faith, and defile the very sources of morality. Hence the various forms of superstition and fanaticism; hence the opposing sects of heathen philosophers; hence the subtle refinements of those "blind "guides, who could strain at a gnat, and "swallow a camel[p]:" hence the sceptical doubts of Christians, who would gladly excuse to themselves the sin they have a mind

[p] Matth. xxiii. 24.

to commit, whilst they know that the plainest declarations of the Law, and the clearest doctrines of the Gospel, forbid it. Men will have a religion; it is natural to them as creatures, and relieves that feeling of dependence of which they cannot be insensible, and it is their only solace in distress: but they will not restrain their passions; these must be gratified, while they have any means of gratifying them, and nothing can be admitted which would insist upon that restraint as a necessary part of Religion. It cannot therefore be surprising, if, under such circumstances, we see the world overspread with perversions of the truth. They owe their origin to those efforts of the human mind, by which it endeavours to discover some method of hiding from itself the visible contrariety between religion and vice. It wishes for both; and it exerts all the energy and all the talent it possesses, to make them compatible. Not that this is a deliberate act, of which the mind is sensible at the time: far otherwise: it labours as much at first to deceive itself, and is as unhappily successful in that deceit, as it

can ever afterwards be in deceiving others. The whole is the pitiable fruit of its corruption; of that unhappy perversion, which gave to the baser appetites of our nature the mastery over the nobler faculties of our souls. But however pitiable it may be, and however necessary it is thus to trace error to its source in a self-deceived mind, it is altogether without excuse in those to whom a Divine Revelation has been communicated. Corruption cannot in any case be admitted as a plea for vice; much less, when it sets itself in opposition to the declared Will of God, and perverts the very means which have been appointed for the cure of itself. But this is the situation of all, who have been called by the mercy of God to the knowledge of the Gospel. In that Gospel the Will of God has been revealed in such clear terms, "that he may "run who reads[q];" and no one who reads can doubt what it is that God would have him "do and believe to his soul's health[r]." If indeed we wish to form a right judgment of ourselves or our duty, it is to the word

[q] Habbak. ii. 2. [r] Baptismal Service.

of God we must have recourse. It alone teaches us our true condition, and discloses with infallible certainty the source of all our errors and all our vices. And the end for which it does so is not to upbraid us with our infirmities, or to supply us with an apology for our sins, but by discovering the nature and the cause of our disease, to apply to it that remedy which will most effectually eradicate it from our souls, and by restoring us to our original innocence, reinstate us in our original happiness. That this is really its design, will appear, I trust, in the course of the following Lectures; a design, which, if it can be illustrated in any degree as it deserves, will so prove the Moral Tendency of Divine Revelation, and so enforce the necessity of obeying the precepts as well as believing the doctrines of the Gospel, as to leave no room to hope, that a sound faith can ever be consistent with vicious practice.

A right understanding of this matter is of vast consequence to all. I presume not to think that I can add any thing to the conviction of those who have already ex-

amined the subject with superior abilities and better opportunities; but to the young amongst us, and especially to those who, like myself, may be destined to labour in the humble but useful sphere of Parish Priests, I may perhaps be permitted to say from experience, that it is of incalculable importance for them to form their opinions on this great point with the nicest discrimination, the most perfect impartiality, and the most patient accuracy of investigation. Upon them and their future exertions the welfare of Christ's Church will, under God, mainly depend; and in order to promote that welfare in the most effectual manner, it is necessary that they should be not only circumspect in conduct, but correct in opinion, and fortified with such clear views of faith and doctrine, and possessed with such sound principles of moral duty and obligation, as may enable them to resist the seductions, to repel the attacks, and to detect the fallacies, by which heresy endeavours to diffuse its poison through the system of Religion, and to enlist in its cause the worst passions of the

human heart. For they will in vain endeavour to make a salutary impression on those who may be committed to their charge, and who must in a great degree look to them for the guidance of their opinions, and for instruction in their duties, unless their own notions are formed with care, and deeply impressed upon their minds. If, indeed, it were an object becoming a Minister of the Gospel, to lay himself out merely to please men, and to gain the goodwill of his hearers, it might not be so indispensable that he should be thoroughly instructed in the Religion he is to teach. To catch the applause of an untaught or an ill-taught multitude, is neither very difficult nor very worthy of ambition. And on no subject is it more easy than on Religion. Religion is an object of interest to every unsophisticated mind, and its being so is a proof of its truth. But in proportion to its importance is its liability to perversion. It is capable of being viewed in two lights; both perfectly correct in themselves; and, when properly placed with respect to each other, both jointly forming the basis of all

the real virtue and real happiness that are to be found amongst men: but when disunited, or disarranged, leading often to as great a portion of wickedness and misery. And it is against this disarrangement that the public teachers of Religion should be upon their guard. They should be guided in the course of their instructions by the course of Revelation itself; they should ever make "the Law the Schoolmaster," to prepare their people for "Christ[s]." That this will not be the most popular method of proceeding may be readily granted; but the Minister of the Gospel must seek for truth, not popularity. To declare, indeed, the glad tidings of salvation, to proclaim mercy to sinners, and to represent the blood of Jesus as an atonement for the worst crimes of the most abandoned profligates, is a task which may at once gratify the feelings of the Preacher, and excite both the admiration and gratitude of his hearers: but it may not always be safe either for the one or the other. No man will ap-

[s] Galat. iii. 24.

ply the consolations of Religion, with a good conscience, to himself or others, who has not weighed well its obligations. He who would effectually lay hold of the precious promises of the Gospel, must be first duly instructed in the principles of moral duty, and thoroughly convinced that he is himself bound to adhere to them. It is in this way that the instructions of Revelation have been arranged. The first lesson it teaches us is our real condition as creatures, and the duty which results from that condition. On our unhappy fall, indeed, and to prevent the despair to which that fall would of itself naturally lead, it pleased the Almighty to make an intimation of mercy, which gave a distant prospect of final restoration to his favour; but the complete development of that mercy was reserved to those times, which in Scripture are emphatically called the "last[t]." The intermediate space was filled up with awful denunciations against wickedness, and awful examples of its punishment; that when the

[t] Isaiah ii. 2. Heb. i. 2.

hour of mercy should arrive, the world, if possible, might be prepared to receive it with gratitude, but too well disciplined to abuse it to licentiousness. It is thus alone that the glad tidings of the Gospel can now be proclaimed without danger. Nothing is more true, than "that Christ came "to save sinners[u];" and nothing is more obvious, than that this great truth is capable of the most shocking abuse. The sinner, who would really be benefited by it, must approach it with that due preparation, which a right knowledge of God and of himself can alone enable him to make. He, who knows God and himself, will acknowledge without difficulty his obligation to obey the Law of God; and he will be well aware, that from such obligation no subsequent dispensation can ever release him. As the creature of God, he must be bound to obey His commands as long as he continues in existence. When therefore to such a person a prospect is opened of obtaining pardon for his manifold transgressions through Jesus Christ, he will be

[u] 1 Tim. i. 15.

in no danger of perverting that pardon to unworthy purposes; he will receive it with gratitude, as a dispensation of unmerited mercy, but he will not deceive himself with an idea, that because it relieves him from fear of vengeance for his past crimes, it therefore gives him a licence for future irregularity. He knows that this is impossible; he knows that he is under an indissoluble bond to obey the Law of God; and that though the Almighty may forgive him his sins, that forgiveness can never diminish his obligation to obedience. Such a man, while he heartily thanks God for his mercy, will never abuse that mercy; will never think that it lets him loose from his duty, or changes the relation in which he stands to his Creator. And if the future Pastor of the Church would preach the truth in Jesus, without danger of leading his people into error, it is thus that he must prepare himself. He must be thoroughly instructed in the whole system of Revelation; he must begin where that begins; he must trace it in its course, and mark the steps by which the Divine dispensations

have been advanced and developed; and he must not apply that last healing unction of God's goodness in Christ, till it can be done without the infringement of sound morals, and without diminishing the authority and obligation of the Law of God.

SERMON II.

LEVIT. XIX. 2.

Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.

AS the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator and Governor of the universe, is the foundation of all Religion, so to the purity of that Religion nothing is more indispensable, than that men should have just and honourable conceptions of Him, whom they acknowledge as their God. It is unquestionable, that men will serve God according to their ideas of his nature[a]; and

[a] Lactantius De Justitia, p. 358. Nec est difficile docere, cur Deorum cultores, boni et justi esse non possunt. Quomodo enim sanguine abstinebunt, qui colunt cruentos deos, Martem et Bellonam? quomodo aut parentibus parcent, qui expulsorem patris sui Jovem, aut natis ex se infantibus, qui Saturnum? quomodo pudici-

it is vain to expect, that if those ideas are either mean or impure, the Religion produced by them should have any elevation of sentiment or any holiness of practice. For what is Religion? Is it not that duty, or the rule of that duty, which men are bound to perform to Almighty God? It is therefore of the essence of Religion, that it be offered to the Supreme Being in the form which may be thought most acceptable to Him; and that form will obviously be thought most acceptable, which comes nearest to men's ideas of his nature. This is undeniable. It is indeed the rule which

tiam tuebuntur, qui colunt deam nudam et adulteram et quasi apud deos prostitutam? quomodo se a rapinis et fraudibus abstinebunt, qui Mercurii furta noverunt, docentis, non fraudis esse decipere sed astutiæ? quomodo libidines coercebunt, qui Jovem, Herculem, Liberum, Apollinem, cæterosque venerantur, quorum adulteria et stupra in mares et fœminas, non tantum doctis nota sunt, sed exprimuntur etiam in theatris atque cantantur, ut sint omnibus notiora? Possuntne inter hæc justi esse homines, qui etiam si natura sint boni, ab ipsis tamen Diis erudiantur ad injustitiam? Ad placandum enim Deum, quem colas, iis rebus opus est, quibus illum gaudere ac delectari scias. Sic fit, ut vitam colentium Deus pro qualitate nominis sui formet; quoniam religiosissimus est cultus imitari."

guides men continually in their conduct one towards another. If favour is to be sought, or gratitude to be expressed, the request and the expression will be so framed, as to be most agreeable to him, to whom they are to be presented. His bias will be marked, and his partialities studied; and from them it will be determined how he can be most successfully approached. Man is quite the same being in Religion as in the common affairs of life; the object of his attention is changed, but he is actuated by the same motives, and guided by the same reasoning. Religion does not eradicate his passions, or plant in him other passions than those which he naturally possesses, but it restrains them within those bounds beyond which they were not originally intended to pass, and directs them into that channel in which they were originally intended to run: it does not endue him with a reason different in kind from that which belongs to his nature, but it enlightens and purifies the faculties of his soul, and thus makes him capable of better and larger views. As therefore in seeking the favour

of his fellow-creature, he will do so in the manner which he conceives may be most agreeable to him, so in seeking the favour of God, he will act precisely upon the same principles. He will approach the Almighty with that offering of duty with which he thinks such a Being will be best pleased; and in petitioning for those benefits which he may hope to receive from Him, he will take care so to frame his petition, as to render it most likely to be well received. But how shall he judge of this? How can he form any opinion as to what is likely to be acceptable to God? Most assuredly he will form his opinion on this question of Religion as he would on any similar question in his common affairs; he will form it according to the ideas he entertains of the Being whom he is to approach. Were he to address a fellow-creature, we have seen, he would consider his character, whether open and benevolent, or dark and churlish; whether a friend to virtue and justice, or easily induced to overlook any instance of moral delinquency. And thus will he judge of God also, and of

the service by which He may be best propitiated, according to the ideas he has conceived of his nature and attributes. If those ideas are pure and elevated; if they represent the Almighty to his mind, as a Being holy, just, and good, perfectly righteous, and inflexible in truth, and with whom no iniquity can find acceptance; such ideas cannot fail to produce a correspondent effect upon the service that may be offered; he who thinks thus of God must serve Him, if he serve Him at all, in a manner some way answerable to these ideas. No man could be so lost to common sense, as deliberately to offer an impure sacrifice to Him, who according to his own opinion was in his very nature essentially opposed to impurity; he could neither hope to obtain his future favour, nor acceptably to express his own gratitude for past benefits, by addressing Him in a manner which He must necessarily abhor. But if, on the other hand, different notions be entertained of this Supreme Being; if He be represented to the mind as subject to passion, and delighting in what is mean and vile;

if He be thought capricious and cruel, unjust and deceitful, and not free even from the baser appetites of men, what kind of worship, and what kind of service, is likely to be offered to such a Being? Surely, as is the God, so will be his rites, and such will be his votaries. They who serve a cruel God will serve him in a cruel manner; and it cannot be imagined, that any one who thinks that the Supreme Governor of the world is not averse to injustice or deceit, can have any real inducement to be honest, or possess any sincere regard for truth. Representing Him to his own mind as Supreme in power alone, which He uses for the more ample gratification of his own passions, he will draw near to Him in the way most likely to produce an immediate, though temporary, effect upon so capricious a Being; he will bend the knee before him with all the meanness of abject flattery, or sacrifice to his fancied rapacity the most costly of his possessions; he will "give the fruit of his body for the sin of "his soul[b]," though he can have little in-

[b] Micah vi. 7.

ducement to give up the sin itself, while he conceives that the God he worships is not free from impurity.

And not only does reason assure us, that so it must be, but the best authenticated history informs us, that so it has been. When the nations at large had in a great measure lost the knowledge of the true God, and had multiplied to themselves such counterfeit deities as best accorded with the degeneracy into which they had fallen, it is well known, that such as were their gods, such were also their worship and service. Those inhuman rites, in which innocent and tender infants were sacrificed to the dæmons of superstition; those detestable mysteries, in which carnal pollution was inculcated and practised as a ceremony of religion[c], show sufficiently to what a savage barbarity, and to what shocking impurity, Religion itself will degenerate, when the object to which it is offered is misconceived and misrepresented. The heathen deities were men in every respect, except that they were supposed to be endued with

[c] Minuc. Felic. Octavius, p. 62, &c.

larger powers; they delighted in festivities, they ate, they drank, they slept, and were a pattern to their votaries in every thing but virtue. Heaven, as the seat of these deities, seems to answer exactly to the paradise of Mahomet, the gods of idolatry appearing to be what the followers of that false prophet hope to arrive at. Superstition, whether ancient or comparatively modern, is in fact still the same, founded in the same erroneous conceptions of the deity, and tinctured with the same alloy of human passion. Whether the scene be laid[d] in the temples of Greece, of Rome,

[d] Parkhurst in קדש. V. Herodotus, lib. ii. Livy, lib. xxxix. 8, 9. and Maurice's Indian Antiquities. Lactant. De falsa Religione, p. 79, 80, &c. But this reproach of heathenism is acknowledged and notorious. And its being so, affords, I think, a satisfactory reason, why, in the decree which was passed in the First Council at Jerusalem, fornication was mentioned among those things which at first sight seem only prohibited for a time: among "pollutions of idols, things strangled, and blood;" things in themselves indifferent, and only necessary to be abstained from, when they were made a part of heathen idolatry. That the main object of that decree was to guard Christians against any thing like an approach to a participation in the rites of Paganism, is obvious from the other particulars specified. But that object

or of India, it is equally a scene of barbarity and uncleanness, the work of degenerate man in the service of a degraded god. And wherever gross conceptions of

could not have been said to be effectually secured, nor that the best means of securing it had been adopted, had "fornication" not been particularly mentioned among the articles prohibited. For this "fornication" was, among the heathens, a sacred rite, part of their religious service; and, as the most seducing part, it was most necessary that the new converts to Christianity should have every possible warning to avoid it. Though therefore fornication, as an infringement of the moral law, was generally forbidden throughout the Gospel, and was for ever condemned as displeasing to God, and an object of his vengeance, yet, as connected with the rites of Paganism, it was proper that it should be specified among those things which were to be avoided on account of their being so connected. Nor does it really occasion any difficulty, that the prohibition of some of those things was temporary; because the prohibition of fornication itself, as a ceremony of heathenism, was temporary, inasmuch as the abolition of those ceremonies would do away this reason for the prohibition. Fornication is not now forbidden in Christian countries on account of its being a rite of idol worship, but because it is a transgression of God's Law; nor is it in any degree less a transgression of that Law, because the temporary reason upon which it was prohibited in the Jerusalem decree is now ceased. See Warburton on this text, who appears greatly to have magnified its difficulty.

the Deity shall obtain, there will immediately follow, unless their operation be checked by some external circumstances of restraint, a correspondent pollution of Religion. Even the pure faith of our immaculate Redeemer has not been able to preserve all its professors from this unhappy corruption, as is too sadly attested by the disgusting narratives of some Romish legends, and the no less disgusting licentiousness of libertine reformers[c]. Idolatry has indeed been ever attended with impurity; and when the Israelites were charged with adultery, on account of their worshipping of images, there is no doubt that, though the language be figurative as applied to idolatry, the crime was in the transgressors attended with a literal infringement of the rules of chastity. And what can be more natural? What is idolatry, but an attempt to subject the spiritual essence of the Godhead, not only to the infirmities of humanity, but to all the pas-

[c] Mede's Paraphrase on St. Peter's Prophecy, p. ii. c. 2. and Sleidan's Commentaries, book xi. Spencer de Legibus Hebræorum, lib. ii. c. 3.

sions and the vices to which we feel ourselves obnoxious? Having once degraded our Creator from his throne in heaven, and brought Him to a level with our senses, we have little difficulty in supposing, that his pleasures must be the same as ours, and that He must delight in what we find agreeable to ourselves; till at last our ideas of Him are sunk in the lowest carnality and the most debasing superstition.

Such and so great is the importance, that men should be impressed with just, pure, and elevated notions of God. Without this, it is in vain to expect that purity of Religion can be preserved; and it will be one infallible mark, whereby to judge of the moral tendency of any religious system, to ascertain what are the notions which it inculcates respecting the Divine Nature. In this every pretended revelation has failed, the obscurity or grossness of its communications betraying plainly the source from which they were derived; and showing, by the deformity of the copy, that the prototype was man in all his sin and infirmity: and it is in this, that the

true Revelation is preeminently excellent and divine. The God, who has indeed been pleased to reveal the knowledge of Himself from heaven, and to provide for the transmission of that knowledge in written documents of undoubted authenticity, is essentially a holy God, and He is perfect in holiness; this is his name, and, if I may so speak, this is his character. By holiness[f] is meant peculiarly a separation from

[f] See Parkhurst and Cocceius. Vitringa in Isaiam vi. 3. has some excellent observations on this subject. How great a blessing it is to be thus clearly and accurately informed upon this important point will easily appear to any unprejudiced mind. That the opinions of heathen philosophers were vague and uncertain respecting God and religion, we have the acknowledgment of perhaps the most extensively learned man amongst them; for he had the advantage of the labours of all those who had gone before him, and he had made use of them. But what was the result? Who can tell, at this day, what was that man's real opinion? He confesses, that upon this subject the best informed disagreed more than upon any other whatever; that it was a most difficult and obscure question, and afforded a good argument in favour of the academic maxim of withholding assent from uncertain things. The very being of God is stated as matter of doubt, though there are some very forcible arguments, in the most beautiful language, in support of that position; and Cicero himself seems so

every thing that can in any way defile; and perfect holiness is a perfect freedom from

far to have made up his mind. But when the speakers in that interesting dialogue (De Natura Deorum) come to the point of *quales Dii sint*, they are confessedly involved in an impenetrable obscurity and irretrievable confusion. Their forms, their institutions, their mode of living, are points clearly beyond the decision of the philosophers; and it is matter of doubt to them, whether their gods interfere in human affairs at all or not. And these points are clearly undecided, after all the investigation bestowed upon them by the most able inquirers of that time. True, there are some splendid sentences. "Quid enim potest esse," says one, "tam apertum "tamque perspicuum, cum cœlum suspeximus, cœle- "stiaque contemplati sumus, quam esse aliquod numen "præstantissimæ mentis, quo hæc regantur?" To a Christian soul these words convey a clear and sublime idea of the Supreme Being, whom he knows and serves; and they do so, because he knows Him from other sources; but the person who spoke those words had no such distinct meaning when he uttered them. For what does he say afterwards? "Cum talem esse deum "certa notione animi præsentiamus, primum ut sit "animans, deinde ut in omni natura nihil eo sit præ- "stantius, ad hanc præsensionem notionemque no- "stram nihil video quod potius accommodem, quam "ut primum hunc ipsum mundum, quo nihil fieri ex- "cellentius potest, animantem et deum judicem!" And are these the precious instructions which are to set aside the divine oracles? Elegant they are, and that they were not correct was the misfortune rather than the fault of those who delivered them; but the man,

any the least possible mixture of what is in any degree impure. Thus the word "holy,"

who can prefer them to the inestimable revelations of divine truth, has in fact no sincere regard for that revelation, and knows not the value of sound instruction in religion.

An eloquent Father, who had diligently studied and understood the writings of the Roman philosopher, at least as well as any of his modern admirers, and was as sensible of the charms of his language and the acuteness of his mind, was led by that study to a very different view of this subject. He saw plainly, that however able this great author might be as to the discovery of error in the opinions of others, he had no certain truth on which his own mind could rest with satisfaction. "Quid prodest," says he, "ad vulgus et ad homines "imperitos hoc modo concionari, cum videamus etiam "doctos et prudentes viros, cum religionum intelligant "vanitatem, nihilo minus tamen in iis ipsis, quæ dam- "nant, colendis, nescio quâ pravitate perstare? Intel- "ligebat Cicero falsa esse, quæ homines adorarent: "nam cum multa dixisset quæ ad eversionem religio- "num valerent, ait tamen *non esse illa vulgo disputanda,* "*ne susceptas publice religiones disputatio talis exstin-* "*guat.* Quid de eo facies, qui cum errare se sentiat, "ultro se ipse in lapides impingat?.....Quid igitur pro- "fuit vidisse te veritatem quam nec defensurus esses "nec secuturus?.....Impugnatæ sunt igitur a pruden- "tioribus falsæ religiones, quia sentiebant esse falsas; "sed non est inducta vera, quia qualis aut ubi esset, "ignorabant. Itaque sic habuerunt, tanquam nulla "esset omnino, quia veram non poterant invenire: et "eo modo inciderunt in errorem multo majorem, quam

as applied to men, signifies their being set apart and consecrated to the service of

" illi qui falsam tenebant. Nam isti fragilium cultores, " quamvis sint inepti, quia cœlestia constituant in rebus " corruptibilibus atque terrenis, aliquid tamen sapientiæ " retinent; et habere veniam possunt, quia summum ho- " minis officium etsi non reipsa tamen proposito tenent; " siquidem hominum atque mutorum vel solum vel certe " maximum in religione discrimen est. Hi vero quanto " fuerunt sapientiores, quod intellexerunt falsæ religio- " nis errorem, tanto facti sunt stultiores quod esse ali- " quam veram non putaverunt.

" Summa rei hæc est: imperiti et insipientes falsas " religiones pro veris habent, quia neque veram sciunt " neque falsam intelligunt; prudentiores autem, quia " veram nesciunt, aut in iis, quas falsas esse intelli- " gunt, perseverant, ut aliquid tenere videantur; aut " omnino nihil colunt, ne incidant in errorem; cum " idipsum maximi sit erroris, vitam pecudum sub figurâ " hominis imitari. Falsum quidem intelligere est qui- " dem sapientiæ, sed humanæ, ultra hunc gradum pro- " cedi ab homine non potest. Itaque multi philoso- " phorum religiones, ut docui, sustulerunt; verum au- " tem scire divinæ est sapientiæ: homo autem per se " ipsum pervenire ad hanc scientiam non potest, nisi " doceatur a Deo. Ita philosophi, quod summum fuit " humanæ sapientiæ adsecuti sunt, ut intelligerent quid " non sit; illud adsequi nequiverunt, ut dicerent quid " sit. Nota Ciceronis vox est, Utinam tam facile vera " invenire possem, quam falsa convincere." Lact. De Origine Erroris.

I shall not pursue this subject further; but I cannot help contrasting the different views and sensations of

God; and though in this case it often has no more than a relative meaning, yet that arises, not from the intention of Him for whose service they are separated, but from the infirmity of man, who fails in properly fulfilling that intention. When men are separated to the service of the Almighty, that very separation implies and requires a renunciation of every thing that can offend the purity of Him before whom they then more immediately stand. I mention this now merely to state the idea of holiness as a freedom from whatever can pollute, a separation from every thing impure. Such is our imperfection, that we cannot unfold our conceptions of the attributes of God

Lucretius and St. Paul upon this momentous question. The former exclaims,

> O miseras hominum menteis! O pectora cœca!
> Qualibus in tenebris vitæ, quantisque periclis
> Degitur hoc ævi, quodcunque est!——

and there he stops in despair. The latter, as to himself, has nearly the same expression of misery, but checked and corrected by a feeling of support and comfort, which gave him the most animating assurance of hope: Ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν. Rom. vii. 24, 25.

without the use of terms, which can be explained only by their bearing on human institutions. The holiness of God, and the holiness of man, even when real, are indeed at an infinite distance from each other; but it is only by considering the latter, and opening the signification of the term by which it is expressed, that we come to have a clear idea of the former. Thus we learn, that as holiness implies the separation of man from every thing unclean to the service of his Creator, it must in the Creator himself import an absolute freedom from the least shadow of impurity. And in this sense we may truly say, that holiness is the perfection of God; for as it signifies a total exclusion of every thing that can defile, and as every aberration from rectitude does defile, so it must necessarily comprehend in its idea every moral perfection that the mind of man can possibly conceive. Justice, benevolence, and truth, are essentially included in the holiness of God, because iniquity and oppression and falsehood defile as much as carnality itself. It is a frequent accusation of the cruelty and injus-

tice of the Israelites, that "the land was "defiled with blood[g]," the blood of innocent victims unjustly shed by violence and oppression. When therefore holiness is put alone as the distinguishing perfection of the Almighty, it must not be conceived as implying spiritual purity alone, but as comprehending all the moral attributes of the Deity; and when in the text we are commanded to be holy, because God is holy, we are not to suppose that we can at all answer the end of this precept, if we attempt to separate truth and righteousness from piety and purity. God therefore, who is perfect in holiness, is perfect also in justice, truth, and goodness; and it is then we have correct ideas of his nature, when we conceive all his moral perfections to be equally essential and coexisting in the same infinite force, and the same indefectible splendour.

It will become us therefore to consider with deep attention, how clearly and invariably this character of holiness is ascribed

g Ps. cvi. 38, 39. Is. lix. 3. Sam. iv. 14. Ez. ix. 9. Numb. xxxv. 33.

to Almighty God in the Scriptures of truth, and how strongly the moral tendency of the Divine Revelation therein contained is enforced and illustrated by this circumstance. Without this, we shall neither understand ourselves, nor can we properly represent to others, the God whom we adore, or the Religion which we profess.

The numerous texts both of the Old and New Testament, in which the holiness of God is asserted, will readily occur to the minds of those who now hear me, and it must be unnecessary to specify or produce them. The Scripture does indeed in such unequivocal terms represent the Almighty as "the righteous Lord, who loveth right-"eousness and hateth iniquity[h];" who "hath respect to the humble and meek, "but resisteth the proud and contentious[i]," and whom none can be permitted to behold but "the pure in heart[k]," that its delineation of the Divine attributes must at once be admitted as in the highest degree just and moral. Nor ought it to be dis-

[h] Psalm xi. 5—7. James iv. 6.

[i] Psalm cxxxviii. 6. Prov. iii. 34.

[k] Matth. v. 8.

missed without reflection; it should be traced to its consequences, and suffered to produce its adequate effect upon our opinions as to other points of religious belief and practice. For as it is most certain, that such as our opinion of God is, such will be, not only our regard for his service, but the complexion and character of that service, it is of the last importance that the idea of God's holiness should be well and deeply impressed upon our minds. And it can be so impressed only by considering carefully and attentively that explanation of this great subject which is presented to us through the whole body of Scripture. I say the whole, because that alone can give us any adequate idea of God's moral character as displayed in the government of mankind. Of that government, which has for its object the state of man in this world and the next, the Scripture may be considered as the history; a history, as far as we are concerned to know it, complete, if taken together, and completely illustrating the Divine economy of providence and grace, but if contemplated in parts, liable

undoubtedly to the errors and misconceptions of all partial views. But looking at the whole of the Divine proceedings, from the first creation of man to his final admission to the New Jerusalem, we shall see clearly, that our Almighty and Omniscient Maker has exhibited throughout in the brightest colours the portraiture of his own righteousness, has acted from beginning to end, as we would say, upon moral principles, and stamped every transaction with the impress of his unfailing integrity. "When the morning stars sang together, "and the sons of God shouted for joy[l]," because a new world had sprung up at the command of the Almighty, they had reason to exult and to praise its all-wise Creator. His new creation was fair and lovely; for it was formed in righteousness and innocence; and as yet no taint of sin had infected its purity, or embittered its happiness. All was unmixed joy, because all was unmixed goodness. Upon every thing in creation was written "Holiness to the "Lord[m]," and upon every thing He be-

[l] Job xxxviii. 7. [m] Exod. xxviii. 36.

stowed the fulness of his Divine blessing. And the blessing was bestowed upon the creature because it was good. The goodness indeed was derived from the same source as the blessing, and therefore it is no doubt true, that in thus rendering his own creatures happy, the Almighty rewarded in them his own gifts of grace and goodness. But He who gave both, decreed that they should always go together; and, in conformity to his own essential holiness and ineffable happiness, decreed that derived happiness should be attached also to derived holiness. And this He declared, before that derived holiness had been impaired by sin, announcing to man in the very first communication of his Will, that the loss of his integrity would be attended with the loss also of the blessings which he enjoyed. The promises and the threatenings, the rewards and the punishments of God, were from the beginning thus clearly annexed to innocence and guilt respectively: while his favour was confined exclusively to the former, his displeasure was as plainly denounced against the latter. And

when, by the unhappy fall of our first parents, guilt did contaminate a world which the voice of its Omniscient Creator had before pronounced perfectly "good[n]," the change which had been threatened immediately followed. Its Almighty Governor could not withhold the punishment, which his infinite justice necessarily awarded to the guilty. The world had become wicked; and it was requisite to show, that the unavoidable consequence of wickedness was misery. The honour of God's attributes required this vindication of their essential rectitude; his righteousness and holiness demanded to be cleared from the imputation of favouring the introduction of sin into the world. And they were vindicated before men and angels. The agents in this unhappy transgression of Divine law were put under a curse proportioned to their several degrees of guilt, and banished from the presence of God, who is the only source of good, natural and moral. The whole creation was made subject to "vanity[o]" on their account; no longer

[n] Gen. i. 31. [o] Rom. viii. 20.

preserved in its original integrity, no longer constant in its motions or productions, no longer wearing the same uniform appearance of peace and harmony, but obnoxious to decay, and perpetually fluctuating; deceiving the hopes of man with delusive promises of enjoyment, and alarming his fears with portentous threatenings of ruin and devastation; and affording to the wisest of human preachers, who had tried and examined the best of its proffered advantages, cause to exclaim at last, that all was "va-"nity and vexation of spirit[p]," unsound and hollow, unstable and uncertain.

But if God on the very first departure from virtue took care thus to vindicate his own attributes, He has taken no less care to manifest that vindication, and to support it, in the whole of his transactions with mankind, through all their generations from Adam to the present day. In profane history indeed this is not so distinctly seen; because, though the interference of Divine Providence was often displayed in a very remarkable manner, yet the compilers of

[p] Eccles. i. 14.

that history, being mere uninspired men, and ignorant besides of true theology, could not interpret the providential bearing of the events which they recorded; and therefore the particular instances of God's hatred of vice and regard for virtue are not always brought so clearly under our notice. And yet, whoever shall read, with a mind properly disposed and duly prepared by moral tuition, even this account of the rise and progress, the decline and fall of the various empires, which one after another have exercised dominion on the earth, will see and acknowledge, that they rose by virtue, and fell by vice; thus affording a plain attestation, that there is a God who ruleth in the heavens, and that that God is just. This appears plain even on a superficial view of the records of mankind, as exhibited by the ordinary historians of human affairs. Nor will it lessen the weight of this testimony to God's moral government, and the manifest interference which it implies in favour of moral rectitude, to say, that the success and failure of these nations was rather the natural result of

their virtue and vice respectively, than any reward or punishment assigned by the judgment of God. For allowing this in a certain degree, yet must it be acknowledged by all who own any providential superintendance, that it was the ordinance of God which originally appointed this natural connection between virtue and prosperity on the one hand, and vice and adversity on the other. It should ever be remembered, that both natural and moral good take their rise from the same source, and therefore it was to be expected that they should flow in one united stream. But however true it is, that virtue is generally attended with ultimate success, and vice for the most part involved in ruin and destruction, still it is evident, that in this world it is not always and invariably so, which it would be, if the one necessarily resulted from the other. Originally, no doubt, this connection was certain and infallible, and the immutable justice of the Divine intention will at last be made apparent to the universe; but the truth is, sin has brought difficulty and confusion into every thing that concerns the

present state of man. When human virtue ceased to be perfect and steady, human happiness became broken and inconstant. It is this, that by its own real fluctuations has introduced seeming inequalities into the proceedings of Divine Providence. God might fairly address the whole race of men as He once addressed the house of Israel; "Are not my ways equal? are not your "ways unequal[p]?" Surely it must be confessed, that the ways of man, even when he endeavours to order them aright, are most evidently "unequal," and therefore he should neither be surprised nor offended, if, being thus unsteady in his integrity, he is rewarded with a success that partakes of his own defectibility. Rather should he bless God for his mercy, in thus condescending to notice a being so little worthy of his regard, and who had so justly merited his displeasure! The imperfection and unsteadiness of human virtue must be frankly acknowledged by the stoutest advocate for the excellency of our nature; and it must be clear, that imperfect and unsteady

[p] Ezek. xviii. 29.

virtue can claim no precise reward from a God, who is Himself perfectly and uniformly just: a point this, which should, I think, be considered more than it is. In discussing the dispensations of Providence [q], authors sometimes appear to argue, as if men were perfectly virtuous or entirely vicious, and therefore that God is bound to reward the one, and punish the other, according to the strict measure of merit and demerit. Alas! if the Almighty had proceeded in this way, and weighed the claims of nations and individuals in the balance of the heavenly sanctuary, no flesh could have lived before Him, much less could any man or society of men have claimed a reward for their merits. If God had rewarded only that virtue to which a reward was due, He could have found no object of his bounty among the sons of men. In condescending to extend his care over the descendants of a fallen creature, and to encourage their feeble endeavours at a con-

q Sherlock on Providence, who has with great clearness vindicated the justice and holiness of God's government of the world.

formity to his Will, by bestowing upon them some marks of his approbation, the Omnipotent Creator exercised a mercy and a forbearance to which the creatures themselves were no way entitled. The source of that forbearance we must seek elsewhere: but impartial reason will tell us, that if an almighty and all-righteous God is pleased to bestow any token of his favour upon the imperfect virtue of those, who have otherwise incurred his displeasure by transgression, it must proceed from his mercy, not their right, from his compassion, not their merit. And yet that He was just, he showed clearly, by giving, in general, success to virtue, and crushing, sooner or later, the attempts of vice; though He still reserved to Himself the right of marking the imperfection of human integrity, by stamping its reward with the same unsteadiness and imbecility.

But it is in the pages of Divine truth that the holiness and righteousness of God are seen in their own unclouded splendor, and free from that obscurity, which more or less attends all the reasonings of men

on the ways of their Almighty Creator. There we have the history of his proceedings given by Himself, and He has frequently condescended to assign the reasons upon which those proceedings were founded; and in both is contained the most satisfactory and undeniable demonstration of his righteousness. We have already had occasion to remark, how this was exemplified in the original happiness of the world, and its subsequent misery. It is equally visible, as the stream of the sacred history descends. In that first awful crime, which followed the corruption of our nature, and so strongly attested it by the barbarous shedding of a brother's blood, God showed at once, and in a manner which ought to have conveyed the knowledge of his justice to every subsequent generation, that cruelty and malice and envy should find no favour with Him. The cry of murdered innocence was heard in the court of heaven, and its call for vengeance received instant attention; the wretched perpetrator of so foul a crime was marked with a brand of eternal infamy, and banished from the pre-

sence of his Maker. The death which he had deserved was indeed delayed, that by the sight of one upon whom the wrath of heaven had so visibly rested, the repetition of this dreadful offence might, if possible, be for ever prevented among the sons of men.

But visible and awful as this visitation was, and known as it must have been to the descendants of this wretched object of Divine indignation, it yet failed of its effect; it failed to correct the innate depravity of the human heart, or to stop the torrent of iniquity which flowed from that polluted source. As men multiplied upon earth, iniquity abounded more and more; the increase of the one kept pace with the increase of the other. And could a righteous God bear with it, or did He bear with it? Not only the Scripture of truth, but the scattered remnants of tradition among the heathen, and the face of visible nature at the present day, assure us, that He did not; that the world, which He himself had made, and blessed because it was good, He cursed and destroyed because it was

wicked. But as He was just in this destruction of the wicked, so He was no less just in the preservation of a remnant, who were not unworthy of his favour. Amidst the general wreck of every thing that was good in man, He found one individual who had held fast his integrity, who at least might be considered as comparatively righteous, and to whom the mercy of God might be extended without impeachment of his justice. Him therefore He preserved, and with him He again made a covenant, and to him He again gave a law, by which, if it might be, his posterity might be taught the true line of their duty, and might avoid those crimes of barbarous cruelty, and those foul stains of abominable carnality, which had brought upon their ancestors a punishment so awfully destructive. But even this failed. Human corruption broke through every restraint, and triumphed in contempt of the Divine mercy, and in defiance of Divine justice. Again iniquity increased with the increase of mankind; and again it became necessary, that a check should be given to the spread-

ing evil by some peculiar demonstration of the Divine displeasure. The confusion of tongues at the building of Babel, and the dispersion and disunion which followed; the call of Abraham, which seemed to imply at least a temporary rejection of the rest of mankind; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by the immediate interposition of heaven, and no less the saving of Lot, because he was righteous, by so remarkable a distinction of his case from the mass of those who deserved to perish; the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, with their subsequent government and discipline in the land of Canaan and in Babylon; and still more clearly, the whole scheme of the Gospel in all its parts and in all its bearings; exhibit throughout our Almighty Maker as governing his creatures on the plainest principles of moral righteousness; indicating his own holiness by the clearest expressions of his hatred to sin; and bestowing upon the imperfect virtue of men those marks of his approbation, which might assure them, that the only way to please Him and to secure his favour was

by a sincere obedience to his Law, and by the cultivation of that virtue which his Law was intended to teach and to enforce.

Such then are the strong lines, in which Almighty God has written the character of his own holiness in the Scripture of truth. If I have succeeded at all in giving a just view of this subject, it will appear of the last importance, that it should be correctly understood. To know God is the first thing in Religion; and to know Him aright we must conceive of Him as He is. But not only is this necessary to a speculative knowledge of the Deity, it is essential to a due performance of his worship, and of all the duties which are required at our hands. As we think of God, so likewise shall we think of his service, and of the necessity of our serving Him at all. Human ingenuity is quick enough in discovering any defect in the foundations of Religion, however slow it may be in comprehending its doctrines, or admitting its precepts. It is ever on the watch for an excuse for its own errors, or some countenance to its corrupt propensities. If therefore God be so re-

presented, as to afford any the least pretence for supposing, that He may be satisfied with a service less pure or less punctually performed than He has himself declared in his word; if any thing of human weakness or human caprice be attributed to Him; if it be imagined, that while to some He is so merciful as to overlook their worst transgressions, to others He is so cruel as to punish their slightest failings with eternal damnation; whoever has imbibed any of these sentiments will undoubtedly make use of them to quiet his conscience in the commission of sin, and excuse to himself the neglect of his duty. How it can happen, that with so much clear and positive information to the contrary, any notions of this kind should be entertained among Christians, may well be matter of astonishment and regret. Christians are, in strict propriety, the children of light, and it shines around them with meridian splendor; but we know, that the light may shine in a dark place, and that the darkness will not comprehend it. We do not err for want of the means of know-

ledge, certainly; but what then? The greater our means are, the greater is the sin of our error. And that we do err is beyond question. We profess to serve a Holy God, and yet we hope to please Him without holiness. The Revelation which He has made of his Will, and in which He has stamped in visible characters the impress of his own integrity, is yet so far misunderstood and misrepresented, as to become to many, not what its Divine Author intended it, an instrument of making them better, but a mean of lulling the conscience asleep, of healing its wounds slightly, and speaking peace to the sinner, when there is no solid ground of peace to his mind. Though the Almighty has declared in express terms, that He is a God of righteousness, purity, and holiness; though in all his dealings with mankind He has, by his promises and threatenings, by his rewards and punishments, shown the most unequivocal hatred of vice, and the most sincere regard for virtue; yet are there those who will not see, that his Revelation is designed for the moral improvement of man, but draw from it

excuses for their sin, and apologies for their iniquity. But surely, under whatever disguise this error may be concealed, it can arise from nothing but a love of sin, cherished and indulged in the heart. The character of Divine Revelation is too strongly marked to admit of any but a wilful perversion of its truths in support of criminal conduct. It has some things which possibly we cannot understand; but it has nothing, which an honest man can mistake as showing any favour to vice. The God, whom it reveals, is revealed as infinitely holy, just, and true; and the Religion, which it teaches, partakes of the same holiness, is invested with the same mantle of justice and the same robe of purity. Coming from the fountain of goodness, and professing to lead men thither, it must, in reason, and it does, in fact, carry with it no small portion of the goodness from which it emanated, and has in all its provisions a direct tendency to plant and to cherish a love of real virtue in those who duly receive and faithfully obey its instructions.

SERMON III.

GEN. i. 27.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him.

WE have already seen how absolutely necessary it is, in order to form correct ideas of Religion, that we should have proper notions of that Supreme Being to whom religious service is due: it is in the next place of great importance to understand the nature of man[a], by whom that

[a] Since writing this Discourse, I have had an opportunity of consulting the learned Bishop Bull's Treatise on the State of Man before the Fall. The reader will of course find there much valuable matter, with the opinions of the ancient Fathers, laboriously collected; but I cannot help thinking that the excellent author has admitted some distinctions suited rather to our present than our original condition. Where all was from God, and not yet impaired by man's sin, it seems difficult to understand the difference between natural and supernatural.

service is to be paid; to know, with as much precision as can be attained, what are his propensities and capacities, what are his relations, what the end of his being, and how he is fitted to answer that end. For as the duty of every creature must be suited to the capacities and propensities with which it has been really endowed by its Maker, so those capacities being known will materially assist us in ascertaining the duty. And to comprehend this in any satisfactory degree, it is requisite that we should be informed of his origin. For that only is the true nature of man, as of every other being, with which he was originally invested by the hand of Him, who bestowed his existence upon him. If in any thing that nature has been corrupted or depraved; if it has been in any degree weakened in its powers, or darkened in its perceptions, if its propensities have been perverted, or its affections debased, the change thus unhappily produced, though it unfits man for the performance of his duty, can by no means be allowed to contract the extent of that duty,

or diminish the obligation to its discharge. The duty which God imposed, because He had given man powers commensurate to its performance, cannot be lessened merely because man has by his own fault lost those powers. And therefore all reasoning from capacities so weakened, and propensities so perverted, will infallibly lead into error, or stop short of the truth. For the true measure of man's duty being that which is commensurate to his real nature, and his real nature being that alone with which he was impressed at his original creation, any delineation of his duty, which is formed from a view of his impaired powers and debased affections, must come far short of a just representation of what he is required to do, that he may answer the end of his being. And hence we may see clearly the reason[b] why some modern writers on ethics,

[b] Conybeare's Defence of Revealed Religion, p. 248, &c. where the learned Bishop shows the defectiveness and obscurity of the scheme of moral duties which he is considering. But I must take leave to observe, that, defective and obscure as it may be, it clearly discovers the source from which all that is valuable in it was derived. For it lays a clear foundation of morals in reli-

who have been willing to set aside the authority of Scripture, and to deduce the rule

gion; a thing which none of the philosophers, much less the common herd of mankind, were able to do before the promulgation of Christianity. That is most true, which the learned Calmet has remarked in his preface to the Book of Wisdom, that "in the writings "of the heathen philosophers it has but little concern "or connection with religion and the practice of real "virtue." "Plato," says Lactantius, "multa de uno "Deo locutus est, a quo ait constitutum esse mundum, "sed nihil de religione." And how did it happen, that this author did that, and represented it as so easy to be done, which that prince of philosophers could not do? Common sense and common honesty, and a very small share of modesty, would have compelled him to own, that he owed his better success in the delineation of man's duty to the better instructions he had received. He had been catechised in the Christian religion, however much he might affect to despise it, and there he had learnt that piety was the basis of morals; there he had learnt to make that threefold division of human duty which the Apostle had plainly explained to the disciples of Christ, but which no mere master of philosophy had ever presumed to attempt. It was only when ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος ἐπεφάνη πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, that the σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι was clearly established as the rule of human life. Now that it is revealed, it is no doubt level to the comprehension of the meanest understanding amongst us; but we may safely say, that the highest would never have discovered it: because, in fact, after the knowledge of the true God was lost, and with it the knowledge of

and obligation of morals from reason alone, have yet had better success in their at-

man's duty as obedience to a divine law, moral duty and religion never were again united till their union was revealed in the Gospel. And this is a point of great importance, not merely to prove the value and necessity of revelation to those who are disposed to reject it, but to teach an useful lesson also to those who really have an esteem for that revelation, and who are inclined to represent themselves as the only persons who have a proper regard for its truths. Such a feeling is, I fear, in full operation at this particular time. The plain declarations of the Gospel, though upon the most important points of religion and morals, seem to be considered as beggarly elements; the great improvement which it has wrought in the world by the establishment of a pure worship, by improving the laws and institutions of society, and by providing for the stated and public instruction of all orders of men in the Christian Church, is looked upon as nothing; it is looked upon as nothing, that the ignorance and impurity and barbarity of idol service has been exchanged for a clear knowledge of God, and of the worship by which He can be most acceptably and suitably served. The Gospel is considered as something beyond all this; something that addresses itself almost exclusively to the feelings, and of which sober information is scarcely reckoned any part at all. "Hence," as the late Bishop Randolph judiciously remarked, "has it been asserted, that the "Gospel was first preached on a certain day in a parish, "where to his own certain knowledge every duty of a "Minister of the Gospel had been regularly performed "by a diligent conscientious Clergyman long before."

tempts than their heathen predecessors. The Scriptures, which they have so pre-

But that conscientious diligence in duty was nothing, as it did not satisfy a certain craving for enthusiastic novelty; and it was no proof that the Gospel had been before introduced into that parish, that God was purely worshipped, that pure morals were taught, and that the supports and comforts of religion were largely and regularly administered. And yet it was undeniable, that this change was owing to the Gospel; and had the advantage been novel, it would have been acknowledged, but having been long enjoyed, it ceased to excite regard, and obtained not the gratitude it deserved. But this error is nourished and promoted by another cause. In the writings of the Apostles and first teachers of Christianity, glorious things are said of the change which was wrought in the world by the promulgation of Gospel truth. The knowledge diffused by the Gospel is light, the ignorance of heathenism is darkness, and those who turned from Paganism to the profession of Christianity, are said to pass from darkness to light. The effects produced by the rites and institutions of the Gospel are described as powerfully operating upon the minds and affections of those who were admitted to them, and effecting an immediate and visible distinction between believers and unbelievers. The Church of God, in which they were placed by these means, is represented as a society of elect and sanctified beings, and contrasted strongly with the world of sinners, in which all who did not profess Christianity were included. And at that time the contrast was striking. On the one side were the worshippers of heathen idols, immersed in all the pollution of that impure service,

sumptuously endeavoured to depreciate, have supplied them with all the advantages they possess. And this they have done, not merely by presenting them with a more perfect scheme of duty ready drawn up to their hands, but by informing them what was the true original constitution of man.

ignorant of the true God, and involved in all the wickedness which that ignorance cherished; on the other were the disciples of Jesus, taught clearly every branch of their duty, and supplied with the most powerful motives to the discharge of it: and it was scarcely possible to speak in terms too strong of the marked distinction between them. But to argue from this, that the same distinction is to be looked for between the members of the same Church; to talk of one part of that Church as involved in darkness and sin, and the other as alone enjoying the benefit of Gospel light, is to abuse the language of the Apostles, and apply it to a state of things to which they themselves never intended to apply it. If any error has crept in, it ought no doubt to be exposed and corrected; but it should never be said, that baptized persons, who have been admitted into the Church of Christ by the way which He himself has prescribed, are not Christians, nor that his Gospel is not preached, where its truths are publicly delivered in his own words, where a belief in it is at least professed, and where its institutions are regularly observed. Such conduct is neither decent nor just, and it is extremely ungrateful, as setting little value upon all the good that Christianity has done in the world.

Understanding this, and being taught infallibly the relation in which mankind stand to their Creator, they were enabled to compile from the principles with which they were thus supplied such a system of moral instruction, as might appear to be the product of their own unassisted reason. Perverse and ungrateful men, who could thus abuse the light of Revelation, and make the gift of God subservient to their own vanity! The ancient philosophers proceeded upon wiser and honester principles; and if from the deficiency of their religious knowledge they failed in their delineations of human duty, they were free from the crime of perverting or corrupting the oracles of God. Looking at mankind as they appeared to them in their condition at that time, and combining the few principles of moral instruction, which they had derived from their predecessors, with their own experience of what conduced to the happiness and improvement of their species, considered either as individuals or as united in society, and examining those springs and motives of action, which by consulting their

own breasts they found most powerfully to influence the human heart and affections, they framed with much acuteness and much labour some tolerable scheme of useful discipline, by which the passions of men might be restrained, their reason improved, their happiness advanced, and the peace of society secured. And in so doing they have deserved for ever the gratitude of posterity. They did what they could[c] to make men

[c] It is of great importance, that the real use and value of ancient classical learning should be correctly understood. As an elementary study, under proper direction, it is excellent. It teaches the true method of writing and speaking with perspicuity, elegance, and force; it enlarges the intellectual faculties, by exercising them freely upon subjects deeply interesting to the human mind; it abounds in noble sentiments, and shows us, by precept and example, that the best part of mankind have always been on the side of virtue. But if, beyond this, we take the teachers of heathen philosophy as our masters in religion and morals, and permit their subtlety and their eloquence in any degree to diminish our regard for the plain but profound enunciations of holy writ, and to make us less attentive to that way of salvation which it has revealed, and which is to be found in it alone, we are clearly guilty of the most egregious folly, by preferring the uncertain speculations of men to the infallible oracles of God; speculations which are

wiser and better; and to this day, those who read their works with minds properly disposed, will become wiser and better by the perusal. Not that they contain any thing which we can now want to direct us in our duty, but that the reading of them is an useful exercise of our reason, and tends in a peculiar manner to unfold the faculties of our minds; and those who are best exercised in the moral discussions which they contain, and have most nearly examined the historical facts upon which they are founded, will be best prepared to understand those results of the highest reason which the Scripture lays before us: I call them the results of reason, because they appear so to us; though it must be confessed, that the expression does not exactly suit the nature of the Divine communications. The Scripture delivers the most important truths in the plainest terms, and most frequently in the concisest form. And that it does so is one great proof of its authenticity. The distinction between

only therefore valuable, because in some instances they harmonize with those oracles.

divine and human knowledge ought to be marked and confessed. The excellence of man in the best use of his reason would be degradation to the Deity. God does not reason; He, from whom every thing proceeds, knows every thing without investigation and without an effort. And what He thus knows, He declares with authority; He does not prove it to be true; it is therefore true, because He has announced it. Whatever He declares, bears on its very face the stamp of divinity and of truth. And it is impossible not to observe this distinguishing characteristic in all the discourses of our blessed Redeemer. He never appears to reason on the highest truths which He utters; the conception of them never seems to cost Him the semblance of an effort; his mind sees intuitively the most exalted mysteries of heaven, and the deepest recesses of the earth. And He speaks of them accordingly, with the calmness of one to whom they were familiar, and of whom it might be said in our language, that they rather presented themselves to his mind than that He sought

after them. That this was indeed a mark of Divinity will perhaps appear with yet greater probability, if we consider, that even the Apostles, though inspired, and infallibly assured of the truth of what they delivered, do not deliver it in the same way; they reasoned and argued, and did not think themselves entitled to neglect the ordinary method of producing conviction in the minds of their hearers. St. Paul is acknowledged, and deservedly, to be the most acute and profound of reasoners; but what was his excellency, even as an inspired Apostle, was below the dignity of his Master. But though it thus pleased God and his Son, and it became Them, to declare the truth in short and clear revelations of their Will[d], yet if man will inquire into the reasons of that truth, and analyse its parts, he can do so only by the most laborious exertions of his mind; and unless his mind be previously and duly disciplined,

[d] Quæ quidem tradita sunt breviter ac nude; nec enim decebat aliter ut cum Deus ad hominem loqueretur, argumentis adsereret suas voces. De falsa Sapientia.

he will be in imminent danger of falling into error, of wresting to his destruction what was intended for his salvation. Even if men were content to receive the merciful admonitions and kind directions of Almighty Wisdom, as they ought, without question or cavil; if they would obey them without reluctance, and rest in them without dispute, it would still be necessary to call upon them to exercise their reason, that they might be prepared to comprehend the principles of revealed truth; and to appreciate duly the value of the instruction thus graciously communicated. But the restlessness of human nature has never suffered it so to be; and therefore even Apostles were obliged to enter into much subtlety of argument, and to require of their disciples, that they should always be ready to "give a reason of the hope that "is in" them. We must therefore ever be content to defend our holy Religion after the manner of men, and after the manner of men must we endeavour to understand it. The plainest dictates of Divine truth are, as I said, the results of the highest

reason; and to comprehend and make use of them, it is necessary that our reason should be improved, as far as it can be, by all the means with which Divine providence and grace have supplied us.

With regard then to what is intended to form the main feature of this Discourse, the original nature and constitution of man, nothing can be plainer, nothing can be more simple, and in that plainness and simplicity nothing can be more dignified, than the manner in which the matter of fact, contained in my text, is stated; "God created man in his own image, in "the image of God created He him." Yet plain and simple as it appears when thus revealed, it is what the mere reason of man could never have discovered. The origin assigned by some to the human race is too absurd to be confuted[e]; though it may

[e] The Epicurean account is no more than this:—

Crescebant uteri terræ radicibus apti.

But the learned author of the Intellectual System gives the following report of the opinion of Aristotle himself. "Aristotle in his book of the Generation of Animals "writeth thus: Περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τετραπόδων γενέ- "σεως, ὑπολάβοι τὶς ἂν, εἴπερ ἐγίνοντό ποτε γηγενεῖς, ὥσπερ

serve one useful purpose of teaching us humility, by showing us the degradation

" φασί τινες, δύο τρόπων γίνεσθαι τὸν ἕτερον· ἢ γὰρ ὡς σκώλη-
" κος συνισταμένου τὸ πρῶτον, ἢ ἐξ ὠῶν. If men and four-
" footed animals were ever generated out of the earth,
" as some affirm, it may be probably conceived to have
" been one of these two ways, either that they were
" produced as worms out of putrefaction, or else formed
" in certain eggs, growing out of the earth. And then
" after a while he concludes again; Εἴπερ ἦν τὶς ἀρχὴ τῆς
" γενέσεως πᾶσι τοῖς ζώοις, εὔλογον δυεῖν τούτων εἶναι τὴν ἑτέ-
" ραν· that if there were any beginning of the genera-
" tion of all animals, it is reasonable to think it to have
" been one of these two forementioned ways. It is
" well known, that Aristotle, though a Theist, else-
" where asserteth the world's eternity, according to
" which hypothesis of his, there was never any first
" male nor female, in any kind of animals; a thing ut-
" terly repugnant to our human faculties, that are never
" able to frame any conception of such an infinity of
" number and time, and of a successive generation from
" eternity. But here Aristotle himself seems staggering
" or sceptical about it: if men were ever generated out
" of the earth; and, if there were any beginning of the
" generation of animals. As he doth also in his Topics
" propound it for an instance of a thing disputable;
" Πότερον ὁ κόσμος ἀΐδιος ἢ οὔ, whether the world were
" eternal or no? He ranking it amongst those περὶ ὧν
" λόγον μὴ ἔχομεν ὄντων μεγάλων, those great things for
" which we can give no certain reason, one way nor
" other. Now, saith he, if the world had a beginning,
" and if men were once γηγενεῖς, or αὐτόχθονες, earth-
" born, then must they have been, in all probability,

to which our uninformed intellect may be reduced. And if others reasoned better by considering man as a creature, yet were they completely at a loss as to the truth of his original formation; how or when he was made, with what capacities endowed, or for what end, were questions on which their discussions, whatever ability they might display, could lead to no satisfactory conclusion. Nor could it be otherwise. When they lost the tradition of their origin, or at least when it became so con-

" generated as worms out of putrefaction, or else out " of eggs; he supposing, it seems, those eggs grown out " of the earth. But the generality of Atheists in Ari- " stotle's time, as well as Theists, denying this eternity " of the Mundane System, as not so agreeable with " their hypothesis, because so constant and invariable " an order in the world from eternity hath not such an " appearance or semblance of chance, nor can be easily " supposed to have been without the providence of a " Perfect Mind presiding over it, and senior to it (as " Aristotle conceived) in nature though not in time; " they therefore in all probability concluded likewise, " men at first to have been generated one of these two " ways, either out of putrefaction or from eggs, and " this by the fortuitous motion of matter, without the " providence or direction of any Deity." Intell. Syst. p. 688.

fused as to afford no certain light, they could only consider man as he then was, and reason from the view thus afforded them as to the source from which he came, and the constitution with which he was first endowed. And when they did begin to analyze our common nature, what a mass of irreconcileable contradictions must they have found it! When they reflected upon the higher powers of the mind, and its wonderful capacity of meditation and discourse; when they observed the workings of conscience, approving what was right, even in defiance of the will and affections, and correcting the aberrations of the heart, even in the midst of prosperity and enjoyment, they were ready to conclude, that a being possessed of such noble qualities of mind was himself the god of this lower world. But on the other hand, when they saw this same being a slave to the basest passions, breaking through the restraints which his own internal monitor would have imposed upon him, wallowing in every carnal indulgence with more than brutal greediness, not only giving the reins

to his appetites beyond the bounds of moderation, but making his reason the pander of those very appetites it was appointed to control, by the discovery of means to stimulate the overcharged powers of the body, it was scarcely possible for them not to place him below the meanest of the brute creation. It was not therefore to be wondered at[f], that under such circumstances

[f] The excellent Pascal, in demonstrating the superiority of the Christian religion from the satisfactory solution it gives to all the contrarieties of human nature, has stated this point with great force. "Shall it be," says he, "the religion of those philosophers, who pro-"posed no other good but what they would have us "find in our own persons? Is this the true and sove-"reign good? Or have these men discovered the reme-"dy of our evils? Was it a proper method for the cure "of man's presumption thus to equal him with God? "On the other hand, have those succeeded better in "restraining our earthly desires, who would bring us "down to the level of beasts, and present us with sen-"sual gratifications for our real and universal happiness? "'Lift up your eyes to God,' said those of the former "tribe, 'behold him who has stamped you with his "image, and has made you for his worship. You have "not only a capacity of being like him, but wisdom, if "you follow its directions, will even render you his "peers.' While those of the latter herd cried with no "less earnestness, 'Cast down your eyes to the ground, "base worms of the earth as you are; and look on the

they should have found it difficult to come to any conclusion at all; that their best reasoning should have ended in vague conjecture; and that while some raised him to heaven on account of the faculties of his soul, others confined him entirely to the earth, whence alone the greater part of mankind seemed to derive their highest gratification. One short sentence of Divine truth has dispelled all this darkness, and at once cleared a way for overcoming all the difficulties, and reconciling all the apparent contradictions in which the subject has been involved. We are not now left to reason upwards from man to his Maker,

" beasts, your goodly partners and fellows.' What then " is to be the fate of man? Shall he be equal to God? or " shall he not be superior to the beasts? How frightful, " how shocking a distance this! What shall we be " then? What religion shall instruct us to correct at " once our pride and our concupiscence? What reli- " gion shall disclose to us our happiness and our duty; " together with the infirmities, which stop us in so de- " sired a course, the proper help of those infirmities, " and the means of obtaining this help? Let us hear " what answer we receive upon the whole inquiry from " the wisdom of God, speaking to us in the Christian " Religion." Pascal's Thoughts, p. 34, 35. See also p. 38, 43, 44, 45.

and trace his origin and his duty through all the mass of corruption in which the ruins of his nature were buried; but having been told in plain terms how he was made, and what was his primary constitution, we are enabled to see clearly with what perfect justice such a creature may be required to perform what his Creator has enjoined him. Knowing his origin, we know his relations, his capacities, and the duties which must necessarily result from them. Not that we are left to collect this by the exertions of our own reason, even with the help of the information thus conveyed to us. Thank God, our duty is plainly detailed to us in the Scriptures, and great is the cause we have to rejoice that it is so. Man in his present state has so great a disinclination to the performance of his duty, that he is little to be trusted in drawing its details, even when furnished with the knowledge necessary for the task. The still defective schemes[g] of those who,

g Conybeare as above. Dialogue on the Strength and Weakness of Human Reason. Dr. John Ellis's excellent Treatise on the Knowledge of Divine Things.

with all their acknowledged advantages, have made the attempt, in order to demonstrate the sufficiency of human reason for the conduct of human life, prove with evidence enough how inadequate are the abilities of men to the accomplishment of this important work. Still the knowledge of man's original frame and constitution supplies us with a clear view of the end for which he was designed, and consequently of his obligation to perform all that, whatever it might be, which was requisite to the attainment of that end. And not only so, but this knowledge teaches us likewise that he was endued with powers commensurate to his duties. But this important information we derive with certainty[h] from that Revelation alone, which God himself has been pleased to make and to preserve in the sacred writings of the inspired teachers of the human race; and if that information tends directly to prove, that man was formed for the undeviating pursuit of what is just and good, it tends also in the same

[h] Lactantius treats largely and ably of this in his book, De Origine Erroris.

degree to demonstrate, that the Revelation, in which it is contained, is most clearly and decidedly moral in its form and design. The original constitution and situation of man is therefore, viewed in this light, a point of great importance in the consideration of human duty. For we must always keep in mind, that whatever was the nature of man as he came at first from the hands of his Maker, and whatever duty he was by that nature intended and enabled to perform, the extent and obligation of that duty cannot be diminished by any effects, which, under a change of circumstances, may appear not so entirely to coincide with the faculties or dispositions of the human mind. Undoubtedly at first, and in the intention of their benevolent Creator, the duty and the well-being of all his creatures were most intimately united; and whenever they discharged what by their nature they were bound to perform, they promoted at the same time the immediate happiness of that nature. But a change in their nature would necessarily produce a change in this adaptation. If

indeed the change were for the better, and made by their Creator himself, as the range of their duty would be enlarged, so the sphere of their enjoyment would be extended in proportion; but if it were for the worse, and wrought by their own weakness or wickedness, though their duty would continue the same, as being imposed by Him who gave them their existence, and originally adapted their duty to the mode of that existence, it might on such a change prove the source of uneasiness and difficulty. The nature being deteriorated, and the duty still continuing in its primitive excellence, they would no longer coincide exactly with each other; and while the performance would require greater exertion, its beneficial effects would not be so immediately apparent, and might upon occasion seem contrary to the immediate interest of the individual. Possibly this point may not have been so much considered as it ought to be. It does not follow, that because we at present find some duties difficult, and attended with inconvenience either to our interest or inclination, that therefore we

are not under a natural obligation to perform them. When God Almighty imposed the duty, He imposed it upon a nature which He himself had so formed, as to be both capable of what He enjoined, and assured of finding its happiness directly advanced by the performance. For the nature which God gave man was a perfect nature; and if it was perfect, it was necessarily possessed of all those capacities which were required to attain the end of its creation. And thus we come to see the importance of ascertaining in what this perfection of man consisted, and how closely the knowledge of his real nature is connected with the knowledge of his duty. What that nature is, can only be learnt from examining the contents of my text. We are there told, that "God made man "in his own image." Now to be made "in the image of God" will be understood at once as implying some resemblance to Him, the being in some sense or degree like Him. But in what this resemblance consisted has been made an object of inquiry, and some slight differences of opin-

ion have obtained respecting it; or rather indeed learned and ingenious men, viewing this, like many other subjects, in every possible way, have indulged themselves in assigning any point of resemblance, which appeared to have some plausibility of interpretation. These it would be of little advantage to examine. The main point is clear. When we have correct notions of God himself, we cannot easily mistake as to what we are principally to understand, when man is said to be made in his image, and to be like Him. Holy Scripture informs us, that God is a Spirit, that He is perfect in goodness, and that amongst his attributes his justice and his wisdom are eminently conspicuous. From this it follows, that any resemblance to God must be spiritual. Whatever excellence the body of man might have been originally endowed with, whatever of beauty or strength he might possess, it was not with respect to these he was said to be made in the image of the Almighty. They were no doubt the gift of his Maker, and his strength might in some sense be supposed to shadow out in

the lord of this lower world that incontrollable Power, which held, and had a right to hold, all things in obedience to its command. But in this, other animals, possessing a still larger share of natural strength, though not invested with dominion, might seem to surpass their delegated Master. It was the spirit within, that gave him his decided superiority; it was because the Father of spirits had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and made him a living soul, that he, rather than they, was said to be made in the Divine image. This must be acknowledged. Without entering into any critical disquisition of terms, it is obvious to remark, that if by the expressions, "breathing the breath of life, and "man's becoming a living soul," be meant no more than his being endowed with a principle of animal existence, every animal that breathed was as much a living soul as man; and we must conclude, that though we are told with great solemnity and precision, how the Almighty himself communicated the principle of life to his last and chief work, yet no more is intended by this,

than when the earth and the sea are commanded to produce every living thing according to its kind. It is impossible to accede to an interpretation so cold and defective. When we consider the simplicity and conciseness of the sacred narrative; when it appears evident, upon the very face of the history, that no more has been said than is absolutely necessary for giving the information intended, it is not to be conceived, that so particular a mark of distinction described in such precise terms should have no particular meaning. It is against the very form and character of sacred writ. Fair and just reasoning would induce us rather to conclude, that as the account of God's bestowing a soul upon man was thought worthy of a particular detail, that detail was designed to show, that the soul of man was of a very different nature from the animal life of brutes, that it was derived from a higher source, endowed with different and higher faculties, and intended to answer higher and nobler ends. It was, when "God breathed into man the "breath of life, and he became a living

"soul," that he received the impress of his Maker's image, the image of that Supreme Being, who, as He had himself nothing material, could not by any thing material be resembled. Man, as formed from the dust of the earth, was a mere lump of figured clay; and though the erectness of that figure might seem to give him some external advantages over the beasts that surrounded him, yet this advantage did not alter his nature, he still continued a being entirely material, and could not rise above the earth from which he was taken. But when He, who cannot be conceived of aright, unless He is acknowledged to be a Pure Spirit, is said to breathe upon man, and upon that breathing man became a living soul, it is impossible not to see, that whatever was then conveyed was also pure spirit, and in its original purity carried with it the image of its Maker. In truth, it does not appear how this part of the sacred history can be considered as adequately understood or duly appreciated, unless it be admitted to convey to man the knowledge of his real nature as consisting of an

immortal soul, breathed by God himself into a body which his infinite wisdom had prepared for it, and in which it was intended to exercise the noble faculties with which it was endowed. When we reflect upon the many subtle questions connected with this subject, it will appear surely a point of sufficient importance to be noticed in the account of the creation. It was certainly most useful for man to be informed of the origin of this frame of things of which he finds himself a part, and to know precisely whence this curious body, in which he exists, was derived. But if this was useful, if it was useful for him to be told, that God Almighty formed his body out of the dust of the earth, surely it must be confessed, that it was of the last importance that he should not be ignorant what kind of a creature he was; whether, like the brutes around him, he had only an animal life, or whether there was within him any higher principle of existence, any nobler and purer and more spiritual essence, to mark him as a being of a higher class. But unless in this particular account, the history of the

creation does not precisely inform us, that man has a soul as well as a body. Though when he is said to have been made in the image of God, we must necessarily suppose, that the image intended was spiritual, yet this only makes it more probable, that somewhere in the narrative of his origin he would be informed, as well of the descent of his spiritual part from heaven, as that his material part was taken from earth. And that he was told it here, no considerate person can, I think, permit himself to doubt. The immortality of the soul, as necessarily resulting from its spiritual nature, was, with whatever alloy of error, and whatever uncertainty of opinion, very generally maintained in the world[i]; and no more rational source can be assigned for such a general reception of this great truth, than that it was handed down among those traditionary notices which descended to heathens as well as Jews from the common father of the human race, and which, as far as they were true, rested on the same basis of primeval revelation as the

[i] Cudworth's Intell. Syst. p. 20, 21, &c.

more accurate detail of the inspired historian.

But the image of God thus stamped upon the soul of man must be considered as not merely making him a spiritual being. We have seen, that the perfection of God is holiness, and that amongst his moral and communicable attributes his wisdom and righteousness are always displayed in Scripture with peculiar care and effect. No being therefore can be like Him, who is not in some degree holy as He is, and endued also with a portion of his wisdom and justice. God is indeed essentially holy, and infinitely wise and just; and therefore the holiness and wisdom and justice of every creature must be for ever infinitely below those attributes of the Divine nature; but man could not with any accuracy have been said to be like God, unless he had in his original constitution a portion of that holiness and justice. And not only so; but he would not have been a perfect being, unless he had been so far a partaker of them as was necessary for his rank and place in the creation. Man therefore by

being made in the image of God, was made, not only a spiritual, but a moral being; and as he was endowed with all that perfection which his situation required, he was so far morally perfect as to be capable of understanding and performing all those duties, which either the obligation arising from his nature, or the immediate command of his Creator, might impose upon him. The very attributes of God therefore, and the assertion that man was made like God, convince us at once, that the being, whose formation is thus described, must, in his original constitution, and in the intention of his Maker, be possessed of an enlarged capacity, and great goodness of disposition; that he must have on his mind such impressions of rectitude, and such perceptions of duty, as were ready to exert themselves in act whenever opportunities of action should occur. It would seem that thus much is necessarily implied in the image of God. It is strange to observe how some commentators seem afraid of investing our first parent, as he came from the hands of the All-wise and All-powerful source of

every moral and intellectual capacity, with a common portion of reason and understanding[k]; almost denying him the use of speech, though we are so expressly told, that the Almighty freely conversed with his creature, and freely imparted to him all the knowledge of which he stood in need. Let us beware how we pervert the oracles of God by our own vain conjectures, or detract from their truth by a denial of any part of their plain communications. Open infidelity is scarcely worse than the vanity which tempts men, not merely to bring down divine truth to the level of their own understanding, but to make it square with their own systems. This has always been, and always will be, a fruitful source of error, and can only be guarded against effectually by taking the Scripture itself for our guide in its clear and obvious meaning. And in this instance that meaning appears obvious enough. The moral attributes of God are clearly those of which

[k] See the learned Dr. Jonathan Edwards's Preservation against Socinianism, in which this subject is most ably illustrated.

such a creature as man is most capable of partaking, and which are in themselves most evidently communicable; and as he is said to be made in the image of God, it is essential to his very make and constitution, that he should be an intellectual and a moral being.

But if the moral character of man, and the intention of his Creator to employ him in moral acts and duties, be thus evident from the very history of his origin, it is no less evident from the situation in which he was placed, and the task which was assigned him, at his first entrance on life. His immediate employment was to "dress the "garden," which the Almighty had not disdained to plant for him; to pay an attentive regard to her, who had been formed to assist him in all the work he might have to perform; and to exercise that superintendence over the inferior creatures, which is plainly implied in the dominion assigned him. The performance of these duties required, not care and anxiety indeed, (for while every creature retained its original perfection, it moved with unerring recti-

tude,) but diligence and attention; such as might teach man, that he was from the first intended to be an industrious creature, and not a mere indolent consumer of the fruits, which had been prepared for his subsistence. To "dress the garden" plainly implies so much; and it is certainly no diminution of the Divine goodness or wisdom, that the earth was endued with such a vigorous fertility as to require the hand of man to restrain the luxuriance, and to correct the wanderings, of a too abundant produce. No doubt the Almighty could, and the Omniscient knew how to have suited the produce to the precise wants of his creatures; but as He willed it to be otherwise, so, as far as we can see, we must acknowledge that his Will coincided with his Wisdom. As He intended man to be an industrious creature, and as He knew that employment would be conducive to his happiness, He so arranged his circumstances as to supply him with an occupation, which might engage his attention and call for his exertion, and form an elegant relaxation for his mind. But this

was not all he had to do. In the partner of his duties and enjoyments, he had an object whereon to bestow his social affections, and so to exercise himself in the cultivation of those affections, as to be prepared for the time, when the promised increase of his race would call for a very enlarged practice of his social duties. To the various creatures below him, he had in charge to behave as a gracious lord and master; and he was expressly fitted for this dominion by an acquaintance with their various natures and propensities. The whole terrestrial system, animate and inanimate, at that time confined within bounds comparatively narrow, lay before him, in which he might trace and adore the footsteps of his Maker. But he was not left to trace them alone, perfect as he was. His Creator was his Instructor, and taught him as well the nature of his situation as the duties which belonged to it. That He conversed with him, we know; and can we doubt, that He, who made him such as he was, and made him for wise ends, informed him what those ends were, and how best he might answer them?

It is in religion alone that a doubt so unreasonable would be admitted. The whole account of God's placing man in Paradise clearly implies, in the fairest construction of its terms, that He taught him what he was to do there. In one instance this is necessarily acknowledged, since we are told in so many words, that God gave man a law for the trial of his obedience. But it is made a question, whether this law was moral or positive, as I conceive with little necessity. That there is a distinction between moral and positive duties, considered in themselves, will readily be granted; but it should be observed at the same time, that the principle of obedience is moral, even when the matter of the duty is positive. For what is that principle? Is it not submission to the command of one, who has an acknowledged right to our service? And if that principle be not founded in moral obligation, it is in vain to inquire for the basis of human duty. Then is order and government, however pure and however correct, an unnatural restraint upon human liberty, and the command of God

himself might be neglected or transgressed without remorse, could his power be controlled or his knowledge evaded. But the moral nature and tendency of this command may be evinced from its very matter. The fruit, which was prohibited, was not without its allurements and attractions. It was fair to the sight, and inviting to the palate, and powerfully excited curiosity by its promise of enlarging the bounds of knowledge, and opening wider scenes of contemplation to the understanding. It acted therefore as a test of obedience, not merely as the subject of a divine prohibition, but as proving whether man could restrain within the prescribed limits those appetites of mind and body, to the undue indulgence of which it afforded a temptation. Now in what can the moral perfection of man be supposed to consist, if not in this, that all his appetites and passions be kept under proper subjection, and restrained by the dictates of reason within the known line of his duty? What is temperance, but the due regulation of appetite, in respect to the quantity and quality of

food? What is the best guard of continence, but turning away the eye, that it may not behold vanity? Vanity, which is seducing because it is fair, and therefore vain, because it is deceitful and destructive! When God Almighty therefore ordered man to abstain from eating of the Tree of Knowledge, He imposed upon him the moral duty of keeping his appetites and passions in due order; and forbade him to indulge either his eye or his palate beyond what the necessities of nature required, or its real enjoyments permitted. But this prohibition had respect to the regulation of his mind, no less than his body. God had condescended to teach him every thing which it was necessary for him to know. He knew his Almighty Maker, and the duty which he owed Him; he knew himself, and his ability to perform that duty; and knowing this, he knew every thing that could possibly contribute to his happiness. There was indeed a dark and gloomy sphere, the knowledge of which his Creator did not impart to him, and with which it was not intended that he should

ever become acquainted. What then was the duty, the moral duty of man in such circumstances? To acquiesce, doubtless, in the will of Him, who best knew what was most conducive to his real happiness and real improvement. Be it granted, that he felt within himself an appetite of knowledge, which, when excited by an object sufficiently alluring, became a dangerous curiosity. To preserve the moral health of his mind, it was certainly requisite, that he should prevent this desire of knowledge, which was given him for improvement, from either becoming so immoderate in degree, as to involve him in distracting difficulties, or by fixing upon improper objects, to withdraw him from the contemplation of that to which his nature was suited, and by attending to which he would become indeed wiser and better.

It must then surely be confessed, that the whole arrangement of man's situation in Paradise, and the particular prohibition which was laid upon him there, had an immediate tendency to preserve unimpaired the moral perfection with which he was

originally endowed, and in which the excellence of his nature consisted. For in this he was like God his Creator; and he could hope to retain that likeness only so long as he did not lose the integrity of his mind, or pollute the purity of his body. The perfection of man was his resemblance to God in goodness; and to retain that resemblance in its primitive vigour was at once his highest duty and his nearest interest. But it is impossible to close this part of our subject without observing, what has not been sufficiently observed, that the first of moral duties is obedience to the plain command of Almighty God. For if moral duty be that to which we are bound by the nature of the relations in which we stand to the various objects around us, nothing can be clearer, than that the relation in which we stand to our Creator demands from us the most implicit reliance on his word, and the most perfect submission to his Will. To the work of his hands He has assuredly the right of assigning what portion He pleases; and it must be acknowledged, that He knows best what

will best suit a creature, all whose endowments and capacities are derived from Himself. When therefore He forbade man to taste of the Tree of Knowledge, He laid him under a moral obligation of obeying the will of his Creator; an obligation, which he could not deny or transgress, without infringing the relation in which he stood to Him, from whom his very being was derived. And not only so; but his belief or disbelief of God's word was involved in his obedience or disobedience to his command. For He who knew all the recesses of the human heart, and understood even the nature of that evil from which He was essentially free, had said expressly, that the transgression of his command would be followed by wretchedness and death. A regard to the Divine veracity therefore, and respect for that truth which can never be separated from the Divine nature, imperiously called upon man to believe the warning he had received, and in that belief never to have risked the loss of his innocence and happiness, by carelessly neglecting or presumptuously

contemning the word of his God. And it will for ever call upon him in the same manner. In vain will he boast, that he was made in the image of the Almighty, if, by distrusting or disregarding the admonitions of his Maker, he shows that his mind is alienated from divine truth, and no longer retains the impress of divine goodness.

SERMON IV.

Isaiah lix. 2.

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that He will not hear.

WHAT is here asserted by Isaiah of the Israelites in particular, is true of the whole race of mankind; the cause of that separation which took place between God and his creatures was in each case the same; and wherever it continues, it continues for no other reason. To this the whole context of Revelation bears witness. When the frame of this world was finished, and all its inhabitants placed in their respective situations, the eye of its Creator rested on it with satisfaction, and his voice pronounced it good; for as his benevolence had first moved Him to give his creatures being, so the same benevolence prompted Him to make that being a source of happiness and

enjoyment. This was proof sufficient of his good-will towards them; and as there could be in him "no variableness, neither "shadow of turning[a]," as "his gifts have "ever been without repentance[b]" on his part, the cause, for which his favour was withdrawn, must be sought, not in Him, but in the creatures themselves. God, whom our Liturgy represents as "hating "nothing that He has made[c]," and of whom an infallible authority assures us, that He "has no pleasure in the death[d]" or misery of any individual of our species, neither restrained the current of his bounty, nor poured upon man the vial of his wrath, from any indisposition to his welfare. Far otherwise: He made him to be happy, and He wished him to be happy. That garden, called emphatically the garden of delight[e], in which He placed him, and which He had condescendingly planted for his use, was designed by his Almighty

[a] James i. 17. Bishop Bull has explained this text with great felicity and elegance. See Harmon. Apost. p. 501, &c.

[b] Rom. xi. 29. [c] Collect in Commination Service.

[d] Ezek. xviii. 23—32. [e] See Parkhurst in עדן.

Father to afford him every comfort which his soul could desire, and left in fact no *reasonable* desire unsatisfied. But, notwithstanding this clear manifestation of the Divine Will, notwithstanding all the capacity of happiness with which man was endowed, and all the provision which was made for supplying that capacity with proper materials to work upon in the amplest manner, a change, we know, did take place, and man was condemned to misery by the same Almighty Creator, who formed him at first, and formed him for happiness. The cause of this change is assigned by Revelation in the plainest and most intelligible terms; and in assigning that cause, it is consistent with itself from beginning to end. And well would it be for the peace and the virtue of man, if he could rest contented with this plain declaration of the truth; and, instead of employing himself in forming schemes and systems of subtle but perverse ingenuity, consider, with the attention it deserves, the important moral lesson which that truth is calculated to teach him. But the cu-

riosity which was so fatal to our first parents, still operates with unabated violence in many of their descendants, and it is unhappily aided in its efforts by an audacity and a presumption, which could have place only in minds that have lost in a great degree a proper sense of the Divine Majesty. Thus men, in searching for the reason which induced the Almighty to change his measures towards their race, have dared to scrutinize the councils of the Most High, and to trace out those awful footsteps, which He himself has declared to be inscrutable[g]. But human pride cannot bear that there should be any thing above its reach, and, what is worse, it cannot bear that the blame of its unhappiness should be laid upon itself. It must not only undertake to elucidate the whole counsel of God, and bring all his designs and actions to the level of its own capacity, but in doing so, it has not scrupled to make assertions which bring into question the consistency of his attributes. Assuming the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God as

[g] Psalm lxxvii. 19.

the basis of their reasoning, they have dared to limit his proceedings within such narrow bounds as their own minds could reach. All his designs must coincide with their plan; and whatever their arguments may have appeared to evince, that the Almighty must necessarily have decreed. But it requires surely no great measure of humility to acknowledge, that what we know only in part, we should be careful not to decide upon with presumption. "Known "unto God," certainly, "are all his works "from the beginning[h]," and all his intentions are ever present to his mind, with all the means necessary for carrying them into effect; nor can there ever be any incompatibility between one part of the Divine economy and another. But though all God's works and intentions are thus known to Himself, it does not follow that they are known to man; nor can they be known any further than it has pleased God to reveal them. All the reasonings of man respecting them therefore must be continually liable to error, because he is only

[h] Acts xv. 18.

acquainted with them in part; and when from that part he forms a system, to which the whole must be reduced, he is guilty, surely, of a most audacious invasion of God's peculiar province. As far as the express declarations of Scripture lead us, so far, no doubt, we may safely go in the doctrine of the Divine decrees; but the first step we take on this ground beyond those declarations is one of inextricable difficulty, and in which our ultimate failure is inevitable. But it is not a step of difficulty only, it is one of danger also; as it will almost unavoidably lead us into the sin of offending the Majesty of our Creator, by defacing the purity of his word. We shall run the risk of charging Him with designs which he abhors, and, by attributing to Him actions unbecoming his justice, incur the guilt of dishonouring his name and nature. Thus in the point which we are now considering, the change of God's proceedings towards our first parents. Men of daring minds[i] have reasoned upon it, till they

[i] The reader will find an account of the Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian schemes, with the articles of the

have nearly removed the cause from themselves to their Maker; and by deducing all

latter as settled at the Synod of Dort, in Heylyn's Quinquarticular History, p. 522, &c. 591, and 614. See also Nichols. Defens. Eccl. Angl. But it will be useful for him to weigh well the opinion of the learned Bishop Sanderson upon these endeavours to pry into the mysteries of God's decrees; an opinion the more valuable, because he had himself at one time been induced to think well of the Sublapsarian method. "In 1625 a "Parliament being called, wherein I was chosen one of "the Clerks of the Convocation for the diocese of Lin- "coln, during the continuance of that Parliament "(which was about four months, as I remember) there "was some expectation that those Arminian points, "the only questions almost in agitation at that time, "should have been debated by the Clergy in that Con- "vocation: which occasioned me, as it did sundry "others, being then at some leisure, to endeavour by "study and conference to inform myself as thoroughly "and exactly in the state of those controversies as I "could have opportunity, and as my wit would serve "me for it. In order whereunto, I made it my first "business to take a survey of the several different opin- "ions concerning the ordering of God's decrees, as to "the salvation or damnation of men; not as they are "supposed to be really in *Mente Divina*, (for all his de- "crees are eternal, and therefore coeternal, and so no "priority or posteriority among them,) but *quoad no- "strum intelligendi modum*, because we cannot conceive "or speak of the things of God but in a way suitable "to our own finite condition and understanding: even "as God himself hath been pleased to reveal himself to

things from his absolute and irreversible decree, have at once destroyed every moral

" us in the holy Scriptures by the like suitable con-
" descensions and accommodations. Which opinions,
" the better to represent their differences to the eye,
" *uno quasi intuitu*, for their more easy conveying to the
" understanding by that means, and the avoiding of
" confusion and tedious discoursings, I reduced into
" five schemes or tables, much after the manner as I
" had used in pedigrees, (a thing which I think you
" know I have very much fancied, as to me of all others
" the most delightful recreation,) of which schemes
" some special friends, to whom I showed them, desired
" copies.....Having all these schemes before my eyes
" at once, so as I might with ease compare them one
" with another, and having considered of the conve-
" niences and inconveniences of each, as well as I could,
" I soon discovered a necessity of quitting the Sublap-
" sarian way, of which I had a better liking before, as
" well as the Supralapsarian, which I could never fan-
" cy." Dr. Hammond's Pacific Discourse, p. 10, 11.
To this it will be useful to add his opinion of Dr. Twisse's hypothesis, as it is, I believe, still in much esteem with many, and in particular with the more rigid maintainers of predestination amongst my own countrymen. " Not many years after, to wit, A. D. 1632.
" out cometh Dr. Twisse's Vindiciæ Gratiæ, a large
" volume, purposely writ against Arminius. And then,
" notwithstanding my former resolution, I must needs
" be meddling again. The respect I had for his person
" and great learning, and the long acquaintance I had
" with him at Oxford, drew me to the reading of that
" whole book. But from the reading of it (for I read

motive to obedience, and annihilated the moral guilt of transgression. The plain

" it through to a syllable) I went away with many and
" great dissatisfactions. Sundry things in that book I
" took notice of, which brought me into a greater dis-
" like of his opinion than I had before. But especially
" these three: first, that he bottometh very much of his
" discourse upon a very erroneous principle, which yet
" he seemeth to be so deeply in love with, that he hath
" repeated it (I verily believe) some hundreds of times
" in that work; to wit, this, (that whatsoever is first in
" the intention, is last in execution, *et e converso.*)
" Which is an error of that magnitude, that I cannot
" but wonder how a person of such acuteness and sub-
" tlety of wit could possibly be deceived with it. All
" logicians know, there is no such universal maxim as
" he buildeth upon. The true maxim is but this: *Finis*
" *qui primus est in intentione, est ultimus in executione.*
" In the order of final causes, and the means used for
" that end, the rule holdeth perpetually: but in other
" things it holdeth not at all, or but by chance, or not
" as a rule and necessarily. Secondly, that foreseeing
" such consequences would naturally and necessarily
" follow from his opinion, as would offend the ear of a
" sober Christian at the very first sound, he would yet
" rather choose, not only to admit the said harsh conse-
" quences, but professedly endeavour also to maintain
" them, and plead hard for them in large digressions,
" than to recede in the least point from that opinion
" which he had undertaken to defend. Thirdly, that
" seeing, out of the sharpness of his wit, a necessity of
" forsaking the ordinary Sublapsarian way, and the Su-
" pralapsarian too, as it had diversely been declared by

and simple and instructive account of Scripture gives us a very different view of the matter; and one which will impress us with higher ideas of God's righteousness, and with juster notions of our own condition, with a deeper sense of the heinousness of sin, and a conviction, that the connection between happiness and virtue was never violated from any cause but the

" all that had gone before him, (for the shunning of " those rocks, which either of those ways must unavoid- " ably cast him upon,) he was forced to seek out an " untrodden path, and to frame out of his own brain a " new way, like a spider's web wrought out of her own " bowels, hoping by that device to salve all absurdities " that could be objected; to wit, by making the glory " of God, as it is indeed the chiefest, so the only end of " all other his decrees, and then making all those other " decrees to be but one entire coordinate medium con- " ducing to that one end, and so the whole subordinate " to it, but not any one part thereof subordinate to any " other of the same. Dr. Twisse should have done well " to have been more sparing in imputing the *studium* " *partium* to others, wherewith his own eyes, though of " eminent perspicacity, were so strangely blindfolded, " that he could not discern how this his new device, " and his old dearly beloved principle, like the Cadmean " Sparti, do mutually destroy the one the other." Dr. Pierce's Letter to Isaac Walton, prefixed to his Life of Bishop Sanderson.

transgression of the law of God. In this account we hear nothing of any Divine decree; we have no hint, nor the most distant intimation, that the fall of a poor deluded being was necessary to the manifestation of God's glory; but every part of the narration tends directly and in the clearest manner to assure us of this important truth, that the only reason of God's withdrawing his favour from his creatures was the commission of sin on their part. In all that passed between man and his Creator previous to his transgression, there was nothing to be seen but unmixed benevolence and the most liberal bounty, a constant attention to his wants, and, to speak after the manner of men, an anxious desire to promote and to secure his real happiness. It was no vacillation of purpose, much less was it any insincerity of design[k],

[k] The learned Dr. Hammond, in his Sermon on Ezek. xviii. 31. sets himself vigorously to oppose this error, at once dishonourable to God and injurious to man. "Amongst all other prejudices and misconceits "that our fancy can entertain of God, I conceive not "any so frequent or injurious to his attributes, as to "imagine him to deal double with mankind in his

which stopped the flow of the Divine bounty. God ever was and ever will be the

" word; seriously to will one thing, and to make show " of another; to deliver himself in one phrase, and re- " serve himself in another. It were an unnecessary " officious undertaking to go about to be God's advo- " cate, to apologize for him, to vindicate his actions, or, " in Job's phrase, *to accept the person of God.* Our " proceedings will be more Christian, if we take for a " ground or principle, that scorns to be beholden to an " artist for proof, that every *word* of God is an argu- " ment of his *will*, every *action* an interpreter of his " *word*. So that howsoever he reveals himself, either in " his Scripture or his works, so certainly he wisheth " and intends to us in his secret counsels. Every pro- " testation of his love, every indignation at our stub- " bornness, every mercy conferred on us, and that not " insidiously, but with an intent to do us good, are but " ways and methods to express his will; are but rays " and emissions and gleams of that eternal love which " he exhibits to the world." Again, a little further on in the same discourse, he assures us, that " there is no " one conceit that engages us so deep to continue in " sin, that keeps us from repentance, and hinders any " seasonable reformation of our wicked lives, as a per- " suasion, that God's will is the cause of all events. " Though we are not so blasphemous as to venture to " define God the author of sin, yet we are generally in- " clined for a fancy, that because all things depend on " God's decree, whatsoever we have done, could not be " otherwise; all our care could not have cut off one sin " from the catalogue. And so being resolved, that " when we thus sinned, we could not choose, we can

same, and all his promises to man are yea and amen; but though God is thus immutably good, man was not endued with the same unalterable character of integrity. If he changed therefore, he could not expect that God should treat him as before. The very immutability of the Divine nature made that impossible. Had the Almighty continued to man after his sin the same kind and degree of favour as He had shown him while he preserved his integrity, it might have been argued that God's regard for integrity was not immutable. The real nature of God's immutability is sometimes misunderstood and misrepresented. It does not consist in this[1], that whatever God has once promised, He must of necessity fulfil, however altered the circumstances of the case may be, but in a firm adherence to his promises, supposing the circumstances

" scarce tell how to repent for such necessary fatal " misdemeanors; the same excuses which we have for " having sinned formerly, we have for continuing still, " and so are generally better prepared for apologies than " reformation." Sixth Sermon, p. 80—87.

[1] Archbishop Sharp's Sermon on the Profitableness of Prayer.

continue such as his promise contemplated. It is argued by some, because we are told in Scripture, that "the gifts of God are "without repentance," therefore when they have been once given, they can never be withdrawn. The absurdity of this reasoning is palpable enough, and experience perpetually disproves it. There is no gift of God which is not capable of being abused, and which has not actually been abused, and upon that abuse recalled. In the gifts of fortune and of health, this is seen every day; and there is certainly nothing in Scripture to prevent our saying, that the same holds true of the gifts of grace. All "God's "gifts are," doubtless, "without repent- "ance," as far as His own gracious will and divine benevolence are concerned; and the text is thus a full assurance, that they will never be withdrawn from any unsteadiness in His kind intentions towards us. Of this we may be certain; and therefore we may rely with perfect security on the promise thus made us of divine support and protection. But this promise, though it assures us of the immutable good will of

God to those who have been once the objects of his favour, does by no means secure them against a change in themselves: it does not secure them against the effects of their own presumption or carelessness or folly; and should that presumption or folly lead them to abuse the gifts of God, either by neglect or transgression of His commands, they must not plead the immutability of the Divine nature in bar of the forfeiture to which they have subjected themselves. This is clearly and expressively exemplified in the address of God to old Eli [m], and in the proceedings respecting his family. On this occasion the Almighty acknowledges a change in his proceedings, and assigns the reason of that change. "The Lord God of Israel saith, "I said indeed that thy house, and the "house of thy fathers, should walk before "me for ever: but now the Lord saith, "Be it far from me; for them that honour "me I will honour, and they that despise "me shall be lightly esteemed." The real immutable purpose of God is contained in

[m] 1 Sam. ii. 30.

the last words, that He would bestow his regard upon those who faithfully served and obeyed Him: and therefore all his promises are to be understood with this implied condition, that the objects of his favour continue such, as to make the bestowing his bounty upon them not inconsistent with His unalterable resolution, to maintain a discernible difference "between "him that serveth God and him that serv-"eth him not[n]." It would have been in vain for Eli to have pleaded, and he was, with all his faults, too good a man to have pleaded, that God had promised an eternal priesthood to his father's house: for though He had so promised, and his promises were always inviolably observed, yet the fulfilment was not to be expected, unless the circumstances remained the same as when the promise was made. It was therefore no capriciousness on the part of the Almighty, no change of purpose in Him, which induced Him to withdraw his favour from Eli's house; but because the sons of Eli were sons of Belial, and because it was

[n] Malachi iii. 18.

impossible, and totally incompatible with the Divine justice, that the sons of Belial should continue priests of the Most High God. An awful consideration this, my reverend brethren, but founded on the unmoveable basis of eternal truth! But if it be peculiarly awful to us, as exemplified in this instance, it applies to all with undiminished force, when it is considered, how clearly the same truth was promulgated in God's method of proceeding with the father of the human race. To him the Almighty appeared as a gracious Creator, bestowing upon his mind and body the choicest of his gifts, and supplying him in the most ample manner with all that he could want, or ought to have desired. And nothing of all the happiness he enjoyed was bestowed upon him grudgingly, but with that free bounty which assures the receiver, that his benefactor wishes him to enjoy and retain what he has. Free however as this bounty was, and entire as was the good will of Him from whom it flowed, it was held by a condition; a condition so indispensable, that its infringement was

necessarily to be followed by the forfeiture of all that had been granted. The grant was liberal and graciously designed; but it was declared beforehand, that a positive penalty would be inflicted on transgression. And the declaration was calculated to teach, not only Adam himself, but all his descendants for ever, that the gifts of God are bestowed upon the condition of their not being abused; and that the withdrawing them, on their being abused, is no proof of variableness on God's part, but results necessarily from that regard to justice and integrity which is essential to the Divine nature. When therefore in any particular instance they are withdrawn, the cause should be sought, not in God, but man; for though the withdrawing them be the act of the Almighty, yet the reason of that act is always grounded upon some delinquency in the creature. Thus the sin of man was the sole cause of his misery; the sole cause of his being driven from the enjoyment of unmixed good, and what compelled his benevolent Creator to hide His face from him. And is it possible to conceive any

thing better calculated to impress the hearts of all men with an utter detestation of every kind and degree of sin, than this short history of its ruinous effects, in the very outset of Divine Revelation? This plain narrative, perplexed by no sophistical difficulties, is surely entitled to our most attentive consideration. For when we reflect, what was the state of things before this root of bitterness was introduced among them; when we view the peace and happiness and blessed harmony of every thing in heaven and earth, and see the Almighty himself smiling in benevolence upon the pure enjoyments of his creatures; and yet that all this was changed at once into gloom and wretchedness the moment sin was committed; it is impossible not to discern the detestable depravity and insufferable pollution of what could thus defile and deface the works of an All-wise and Omnipotent Creator. It is stamped at once as odious in the sight of God, and ruinous to man. And it must surely be acknowledged, that the Revelation, which thus commences with a detail of the sad effects of sin, in destroy-

ing the fair fabric of human happiness, does lay a strong basis of moral instruction, by showing, in an instance calculated to interest the whole race of man, that the commission of sin cannot consist with his well-being. It originally deprived the creature of his Maker's favour, and it must for ever continue to be offensive to that essential righteousness, which belongs to the immutable nature of God. Like him, who unhappily improved upon his father's wickedness by imbruing his hands in a brother's blood, it bears upon its front an eternal mark of infamy, that all the descendants of the first transgressor might, if they would, avoid what had been so fatal to him. And the mark is this, that it was the sole cause of all the misery and corruption that ever did or does torment and pollute the world. If we ask, what introduced pain and suffering and death into a system of things which had a good God for its Author, the Scripture tells us, it was sin. It does not perplex us with metaphysical subtleties, or presumptuous inquiries into the Divine decrees; it lays before us a plain matter of

fact; and in that fact gives us the clearest proof, which the plainest understanding, if honest, may comprehend and appreciate, that man was made wretched by transgression; and that to this we owe all the doubts and difficulties, the external alarms and inward fears, by which we are distracted, and all the more immediate evils of poverty, disease, and want, whereby we are constantly assailed. But not only are those tormenting disorders, by which our bodies are frequently excruciated, to be referred to sin as their cause; death and dissolution have no other origin. The penalty, which God threatened before transgression, He did not denounce till it had been fully incurred. The Apostle is express, that "by sin death entered into the "world[o];" and if so, it is fair to conclude, that had sin never appeared, death would never have had any power to disunite the soul and body of man. How great an evil death was, when thus first introduced, and how much it broke in upon and disorganized the natural constitution of our being, may

[o] Rom. v. 12.

yet be collected from the repugnance, with which every mind, not entirely lost to the better feelings and better hopes of that nature, entertains the idea of dissolution. Those better feelings working within us show, that death had no hold on man's original frame, and made no part of God's original purpose in regard to him. Of this lamentable depravation of the human system it may be said with truth, as our Saviour said upon another occasion, "An "enemy hath done this[p]." It was indeed the work of an enemy. The Almighty himself had called myriads of creatures into a happy existence, and well deserved to be considered and adored as their best friend and benefactor; but sin, which is in every sense the opposite of the Divine purity, sought to annihilate the creation of God, and reduce to nothing the beings whom He had endowed, not with life and sensation only, but with the nobler faculties of reason and understanding. And as far as the Almighty Creator permitted this poison to operate, it did introduce into his

[p] Matth. xiii. 28.

works that which was most directly contrary to his purpose. Where He made, sin destroyed; where He had bestowed health and vigour, sin brought sickness and imbecility; where God had conferred life, sin deprived the creature of the precious gift, and involved him in all the horror of apparent destruction.

Nor does it by any means make death less an evil, that some men, of depraved minds and correspondent conduct, affect to consider it as an advantage, and endeavour to persuade themselves and others, that it is indeed an eternal destruction of soul and body. For why do they affect so to consider it, and why do they endeavour so to persuade men? Because they know what their wickedness has deserved, and they feel alarmed by those anticipations of future punishment, which their minds, being originally made for immortality, most naturally and readily entertain. Were there no fear of hell, and no conscience to tell the abandoned sinner how he has deserved that hell, abandoned as he is, he would yet abhor annihilation. But "yielding his

"members as instruments of unrighteous-
"ness unto sin[q]," and plainly told by the word of God, that no impenitent sinner can go to heaven, he would gladly labour for a conviction, that either the only place to which he can go has no existence, or that he himself will not exist to go thither. Yet let this sinner have but one ray of hope, that he may possibly escape the punishment which he fears, and that, although life should be extended beyond the grave, it may not necessarily be extended in misery, and death will again appear to him, as it is, an evil, and his soul will grasp with fervor the prospect of continued existence. But though it should be otherwise, though, in such as these, the voice of nature should be stifled by the overwhelming burden of their transgressions, what right have they to be heard upon a question of this kind, whose sentiments are the result, not of natural feeling, but of a superinduced habit of vice? It is their wisdom, no doubt, to choose annihilation rather than eternal torment. Let the better and larger part of

[q] Rom. vi. 13.

mankind be heard; let the feelings of those be consulted, as a fair specimen of what is really natural to the human heart in its wishes on this subject, whose minds are most free from the bias of evil affections and bad habits, and who can look with least dread upon the opening of a scene, which, when once opened, shall never have a close. They will tell you, without hesitation, that, as the love of life is natural to man, so the hope of the soul's surviving a temporary dissolution of the body is consolatory to their hearts, and their best support under all the varied calamities of a life, too full of misery to be the final abode of such as endeavour to serve a good God. That it is a world of misery, though still abounding in proofs of its Maker's beneficence, common experience too clearly demonstrates; it is demonstrated even by the fleeting nature of the good it contains, and above all, by that fatal inroad upon man's original destination, which compels him, when he has just learned to live, to relinquish the scene in which the lessons of his experience and wisdom would be, to ap-

pearance, most usefully practised. But death has obtained an uncontrollable dominion over the sons of men; and this dominion the Scripture attributes to sin, and sin alone: it never intimates, in the most remote degree, that there was any other cause for disturbing the harmony of God's works, or any other inducement for the Almighty to change his measures towards the creature whom He had so distinguished by his bounty. That Apostle, whose authority has been used with an unwarrantable freedom in prying into the mystery of the Divine decrees, is clear and explicit in asserting, that the misery of man has been caused by his sin alone; his plain and unequivocal declarations are, that "death entered into the world by sin," and that "the wages of sin is death[r]." His high and ennobling ideas of the Divine justice would not allow him for a moment to suppose, or to give any countenance to the supposition, that when man lost his happiness, he incurred that loss by any thing but his own misconduct. In this

[r] Rom. vi. 23.

view his expression is very remarkable; he calls "death the wages of sin." Wages are that which has been deserved; to which there is in fact a claim by contract, and for which adequate work has been done. And when he puts man's unhappy fall upon this footing; when he asserts broadly, that death, and all the various ills which harass our race from their cradle to their grave, are what man has merited by his own act, it is impossible to conceive, how he could express in stronger terms, that human depravity was the sole cause of human misery.

Still those, who presumptuously endeavour to "be wise above what is written," are not satisfied. They read, that our Saviour Jesus was "the Lamb slain from the "foundation of the world[s]," and that his faithful servants were "chosen in Him be-"fore the foundation of the world[t];" and upon their own interpretation of these passages they proceed to construct a system, a great part of which rests upon nothing but their own gratuitous assumption. Be

[s] Rev. xiii. 8. [t] Eph. i. 4.

it, that the Omniscient, foreseeing the fall of his creature, did provide a remedy for that fall even before it had taken place: what then? Because His mercy was prompt to devise means by which the total destruction of man might be prevented, is it just or reasonable or decent to conclude, that any part of that destruction was owing to His decree? No such decree appears in Scripture; and we may therefore fairly aver, that it has existed only in the imaginations of those, who, upon so awful a subject, have too much indulged their own fancied infallibility. The ground upon which so audacious a charge was made ought surely to have been, not only firm, but prominently conspicuous; which in this instance is far from being the case. Their argument rests upon this, that whatever God foresees, He must therefore have decreed: and why so? Because the understanding of these men cannot reconcile the foresight with the contingency of future events. Where will human arrogance stop? If these men cannot understand and reconcile all the apparent difficulties of the

Divine proceedings, does it follow, that the Almighty himself cannot? Or is it too humiliating to acknowledge, that the "judg-"ments" even of the Omniscient are, according to the declarations of his word, "unsearchable, and his ways past finding "out[u]?" As to all mere difficulties, in reconciling one part of those "judgments" with another, this answer ought in every case to be sufficient; that where we see but a part of God's proceedings, it does not become us to decide dogmatically upon the whole. Receiving each separately with a full assurance of faith, as God has been pleased to reveal it, we should rely upon His wisdom and justice, that at last every thing will appear consistent, and perfectly consonant to the purest benevolence and the most exact equity. But is there, in truth, any weight in the observation itself? Is there that difficulty in conceiving the foreknowledge of future events to be consistent with their contingency? This subject requires certainly to be treated with the greatest caution and prudence; but I

[u] Rom. xiv. 33.

cannot help thinking, that it is capable of a fair illustration from the ordinary transactions of life. Let us suppose a person placed in such circumstances as set before him two objects for his choice, but do not compel him to choose either: in this case it will be allowed that he is under a necessity, either of choosing the one or the other, or of rejecting both. Now it does not appear, what possible constraint it would put upon his freedom to suppose, that a superior Being might know assuredly, whether, if he chose at all, he would choose the one object or the other, or whether he would reject them both. Nor would the difficulty appear to be in any degree increased, if, supposing this Being to be the Supreme Ruler and Governor of the world, we should further conceive Him, in the certain foreknowledge of this person's choice or rejection, to provide that neither the one nor the other should interfere with the course of his providence or the bounty of his grace. Are not men, who have the care of others, obliged to act thus frequently, though they can only proceed on

such probabilities as their minds are capable of attaining? Fathers and guardians, making provision for those under their charge, endeavour, according to the shrewdest conjectures they are able to form of their future conduct, so to secure their welfare as best to guard them against miscarriage, and against utter ruin in case they should miscarry; but was it ever supposed, that their doing so affected the free-will of their wards or children? And even if they could have certainly foreseen what the conduct of their wards would be, and as certainly have made provision in conformity with that foreknowledge, what greater restraint would this increase of knowledge have laid upon the freedom of those, with respect to whose conduct, or the effects of whose conduct, it was exercised? In this instance it will be granted, perhaps, that it would lay no such restraint; but if not in this, there seems to be no sufficient reason to say, that it would in any other whatever. Let us view in the same light the case before us. There can be no doubt, that God Almighty did, before He made

man, or placed him in Paradise, know, assuredly [x], that, being placed there, he would

[x] A very clear view of Divine Præscience is to be found, I think, in Dr. Hammond's Three Letters on that subject. "Whatsoever," says he, "is seen, or "(which is all one in an infinite Deity) foreseen by "God, is thereby supposed to have, in that science of "his, an objective being: if it were not, or did not "come to pass, it should have no such objective being; "if it have, it is thereby evidenced to be seen by him, "who was, is, and is to come, and so, being infinite, is "equally present to all, and equally sees and knows all "from eternity. What therefore you conclude, as it is "most agreeable to this, so it is most true, that God "knows all things as they are; such as come to pass "contingently, he knows to come contingently; and "from thence I undeniably conclude, therefore they are "contingent.....For it is evident, by the prophecies "of Judas, &c. that God long before foresees sins, which "are as certainly contingent, and not decreed or de-"creeable by God. If therefore any that write against "the Remonstrants go about to retort their arguments, "and conclude from their acknowledgments of God's "Præscience what is charged on their adversaries doc-"trine of predetermination, I conceive it is but a boast, "that hath not the least force in it, predetermination hav-"ing a visible influence and causality on the object, but "eternal vision or prævision being so far from imposing "necessity on the thing to be, that it supposes it to be "already from the free choice of the agent, and that "being of it is, in order of nature, before its being seen. "God's seeing or foreseeing hath no more operation or "causality of any kind on the object, than my seeing

transgress the command of his Maker, and in consequence of that transgression incur

" your letter hath caused your letter. You wrote free-
" ly, and now I see it; and that being supposed, it
" is infallibly certain that you have written, and that
" you cannot not have written. And just so it is in
" respect of God. Only I am finite, and so is my
" sight; I see few things, and those only which are
" present; but God being infinite sees all *ab infinito*,
" that are never so long hence future." Letter I. p. 99.
The second and third are taken up in answering objections, but so as powerfully to illustrate the general subject. The foresight of Adam's fall, and the consequent appointment of a remedy for that fall, are thus satisfactorily commented upon. " Let us instance once for all
" in Adam: it is certain he fell, and in him all his pos-
" terity: did not God foresee or know this, till the
" effect told it him? Then how was Christ given *in de-*
" *creto divino*, before the creation of the world? I hope
" you will not say, he was not so given, when the
" Scripture is in many places so express for it,.....and
" when God's decrees are *ab eterno*, and so especially
" this, the foundation of all the rest, of those that con-
" cern our salvation. For if he decreed Christ before
" the creation, then he foresaw there would be need of
" him; if so, then he foresaw Adam's fall; and then
" why may he not have foreseen all other men's sins,
" all contingent future events, of which he is no more
" the author, and of which there is no more necessity
" that the free agents should act them, than there was
" that Adam should sin before he was created. I pray
" consider this, and it will do your whole business."
Letter III. p. 137, &c. To this I shall only add what

the threatened penalty. This is undeniable. Man being placed in the garden of

the excellent author has quoted with so much effect from Origen's Philocalia. " For the chapter in Ori-
" gen's Philocalia it cannot be but you must have noted
" in it, the weight that he lays on the prediction of Ju-
" das's treason, the general resolution, that ἕκαστον τῶν
" ἐσομένων πρὸ πολλοῦ οἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς γενησόμενον, every thing
" that is future, God sees it will come to pass, and yet
" οὐ προγνοὺς πάντων αἴτιος προεγνωσμένων, the foreknower
" is not the cause of all that are foreknown, citing from
" Susanna 42, 43. that God is κρυπτῶν γνωστὴς, ὁ εἰδὼς τὰ
" πάντα πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν, the knower of secrets, that
" knows all things before they are: then he proposes
" the question, Πῶς προγνωστοῦ ὄντος ἐξ αἰῶνος τοῦ Θεοῦ περὶ
" τῶν ὑφ' ἑκάστου πράττεσθαι νομιζομένων, τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν σώζε-
" ται, how God from all eternity foreknowing those
" things that are thought to be done by every man, our
" free-will may be retained. Which he treats against
" the heathen, that say God's foreknowledge takes away
" all praise and dispraise, &c.; and maintain it just as
" you do, as you will see, if you compare your and their
" arguing. Now to these his answer is, that God from
" the beginning of the creation of the world, nothing
" being without a cause, ἐπιπορεύεται τῷ νῷ ἕκαστον τῶν
" ἐσομένων ὁρῶν, by the progress of his mind through all
" things that are future, sees them, that if this be, that
" will follow, &c. and so μέχρι τέλους πραγμάτων, pro-
" ceeding to the end of things, he knows what shall be.
" Which he doth express to show, that he sees the de-
" pendence of all things, not from his own will, who by
" knowing them, as it follows, causes them not, but in
" a concatenation of human acts and choices; as when

Eden, and forbidden to eat of a particular fruit, was under a necessity of obeying or disobeying the Divine command; one or other he must do; for however free his choice might be between the two, he could not do both. Which he would ultimately do was, we grant, known to his Creator from the first, though not to himself; but why such knowledge in the Creator should have any influence upon the choice of the creature, there does not appear any assignable reason. Not to know the issue of the trial, to which man was put, would have

" by temerity one walks inconsiderately, and meeting " with a slippery place falls, which he that sees is no " way the cause of his fall, saith he, adding, that God " foreseeing ὁποῖος ἔσται ἕκαστος, how qualified every one " will be, sees also the causes that he will be so; mean- " while his foreseeing is not the cause of their being " what they are, but though strange, saith he, yet it is " true, τὸ ἐσόμενον αἴτιον τοῦ τοιάνδε εἶναι τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ " πρόγνωσιν, the thing future is the cause that such a " foreknowledge is had of it; for it doth not, because " it was foreknown, come to pass, but because, ἔμελλε " ἔσεσθαι, it was to come to pass, it was known." P. 144, &c. This seems plain and unexceptionable; and I cannot help thinking, that any unprejudiced person would receive much satisfaction from a careful perusal of these Letters.

been indeed a diminution of God's Omniscience, but to know it does not seem in any manner or degree to have trenched upon man's original liberty. The statement is plain and simple. God Almighty knew what man would do, though he was left perfectly free to do as he pleased. And what difficulty is there in conceiving this? in conceiving, that He, who is Supreme in Wisdom and in Power, should see beforehand, what any one of his creatures will do under any circumstances whatever? Nor does it in any way increase that difficulty to be informed, that our Merciful Father, thus foreseeing the fall of his unhappy creature, provided even before his fall the means of saving him; that there was an expiation provided for sin, even before the sin itself was committed. All this displays in the brightest manner the goodness and the wisdom of God, but it does not in the least abridge that liberty with which our first parent was endowed; it makes him not in any degree less a free agent, and consequently in no degree less responsible for his actions. It exhibits to us in co-

lours, that ought to excite our highest love and gratitude and veneration, the watchful benevolence, and, if I may so say, the anxious good-will of our heavenly Father, in all the care He took to prevent the ill effects of our miscarriage; but it rests the blame of that miscarriage, and all its dreadful consequences, upon the unconstrained commission of sin by Adam and Eve, and the choice which they freely made of disregarding the prohibition they had received.

But there is another point[y] connected

[y] The monstrous error here alluded to is of long standing in the world. Dr. Hammond thus exposes it. "It was a fancy of the Stoics, mentioned by Plutarch, "περὶ πάντα κατορθοῦν τὸν ἀστεῖον, that a wise man could "do nothing amiss, that all that he did was wise and "virtuous. And they that will have men saved and "damned by a Stoical necessity, nowadays, may bor- "row this fancy of the Stoics also; but Homer, saith "he, and Euripides, long since exploded it. I am sure "St. Paul will fairly give any man leave, that takes "himself to be in a good estate now, to fear a bad be- "fore he die.....The Valentinian having resolved "himself to be πνευματικὸς, spiritual, confessed indeed "that other men must get some store of faith and works "to help them to heaven, ἑαυτὸν δὲ μὴ δεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ φύσει "πνευματικὸν εἶναι, Irenæus; but they had no need of ei- "ther, because of their natural spiritualness; that which "is spiritual cannot part with its spiritual hypostasis,

with this subject, which, though in some respects it may appear more properly to

" whatever it do or suffer, no more than gold by a sink " can lose its lustre; or the sun-beams be defamed by " the dunghill they shine on. They commit all manner " of impurity, saith he, and yet they are σπέρματα ἐκ λο- " γῆς, seeds of the election, the seeds, indeed, deep set " in the earth, that take root downward, but never bear " fruit upward; they never spring at all, except it be " towards hell, nor sprout any branch or stalk of works, " unless it be of darkness. These, forsooth, have grace, " ἰδιόκτητον, as their proper possessions, all others but " to use; and so it seemed, for they of all others made " no use of it. There was another like fancy in the " same Irenæus, of Marcus and his followers, that by " the ἀπολύτρωσις, a form of baptizing that they had, " they were become ἀόρατα τῷ κριτῇ, invisible to the " judge; then, if ever they were apprehended, it were " but calling to the mother of heaven, and she would " send the helmet in Homer, that they should presently " vanish out of their hands. Thus have men been be- " fooled by the Devil to believe, that their sacred per- " sons could excuse the foulest acts, and, as it was said " of Cato, even make crimes innocent; thus have some " gotten the art of sinning securely, nay, religiously. " .....But I hope all these fancies have nothing to do, " but to fill up the catalogues in Irenæus and Epipha- " nius.....pray God, there be no evidence of them " scattered here and there among hasty, ignorant, over- " weening Christians." Sermon viii. p. 125, &c. The good man's charity seems to have got the better of his well-grounded suspicions; a later writer saw cause to warn his readers in strong terms against what was too

belong to the doctrine of Election, which shall be considered hereafter, yet, as it relates to the nature of sin, and would seem

acceptable to flesh and blood, not to have a great effect upon morals. "If at any time," says he, "thou hearest "men teach, that all the sins of God's children are "mere infirmities, venial sins, or that God beholdeth "no sin in the justified, but looketh upon them always "as he looketh upon his Son, in whose face he behold-"eth them as persons all fair and pure; or that God is "the mover and provoker of men to their sins, and so "the true author of them; or that all men's actions, "good and bad, are predetermined, so as they cannot "do more good than they do, nor commit fewer sins "than they do; or that God will rouse him when he "falleth into a sleep of sin, and if he belong to his "election, drive him home again into a good way, will "he, nill he, and make him repent; if, I say, thou "hearest any deliver these doctrines, and with great "confidence too, as main evangelical truths, and such "as must be preached for the comfort of God's chil-"dren,

"Hæc tu, Romane, caveto,

"thou, whoever thou art, that wouldst live godly in "Christ Jesus, avoid them. For they are αὐτοκατά-"κριτα, *dogmata*, opinions that carry their condemna-"tion in their forehead. A man will easily, if he be not "forestalled with prejudice, at the first sight of them, "perceive whence they come, and whither they go, and "what they tend to, even to the setting open a wide "sluice to all manner of sin and profaneness." Hoard's Soul's Misery.

to render it less odious in the sight of God, and less destructive to man than it really is, cannot be overlooked in this place: it would indeed, could it be maintained, effectually destroy that moral bearing of Divine Revelation for which we are contending. The point is this. It has been asserted, that sin is not so displeasing to God in some persons as in others; by which it would appear, that it is not sin which the Almighty hates, but the persons by whom it is committed: for while some fall under his heaviest displeasure for their wickedness, others, though guilty of the same wickedness, find no diminution of his favour. This is a doctrine so broadly immoral, so derogatory to God's justice, and holding out such bold encouragement to transgression, that one is at a loss to conceive, how any man possessed of common sense could maintain an opinion so palpably pernicious in its consequences: and yet it has been asserted, that David was as much in the favour of God, when he murdered Uriah and committed adultery with his wife, as when he best preserved his integrity.

Thank God, this is not Scripture! The matter is there represented in a very different light. The message of the Prophet to the offending King was any thing rather than an assurance of Divine favour. True, he was on his confession, and the contrition implied in that confession, reprieved from the death to which as an adulterer the Law would have condemned him; but he was told expressly, that for this sin "the sword should never depart from his "house[z]," and the subsequent history is one unhappy detail of the incest, rebellion, and murder, in which his wretched family were involved, and to which he had given too much encouragement by his own flagrant example. The sin of David was not unpunished; it was not unmarked by the wrath and vengeance of a Most Just God, whom he had highly and grievously offended. He was indeed spared that extreme and irremediable misery which his crime in itself deserved; he was not cut off in his sin, and doomed to irreversible damnation: and if we examine the circumstances of his

[z] 2 Sam. xii. 9.

case, we may perhaps collect, with great probability, the reasons which made him a fit object of the Divine mercy, even when he had become obnoxious to the Divine justice. The sin of David was not a presumptuous sin; it was not committed in a cool defiance of the authority, or a meditated contempt of the Law of God. He fell indeed, and he foully fell, in the hour of temptation; but he did not seek that temptation, he did not previously contrive the means of illicit enjoyment, or endeavour to stifle the rising qualms of conscience by the adoption of Atheistic principles; he forgot his duty, but he did not deny that he was under an obligation to perform it. And this is a point of great importance. He, who sins deliberately, who seeks occasions of unlawful indulgence, even when they do not offer themselves, who urges his passions beyond even their natural violence by artificial excitements, and makes it his study to justify all this, by destroying in his own mind or in others those principles of religion and morality, which can alone check and correct

the unruly propensities of our nature: he, who does this, though not guilty of murder or adultery, is yet in the crimes he does commit, a bolder transgressor of God's Law, and a more flagrant contemner of his authority, than David in the darkest moment of his deepest guilt. For this man destroys the very basis of all duty to God, all order in society, and all personal restraint. He, who pushes a stone from the upper part of a building, does indeed deface its beauty, and endanger himself and his neighbour; but he, who insidiously saps the foundation, while he pretends perhaps to admire the edifice itself, takes the most effectual means of burying the whole in ruin, and rendering its reerection hopeless. And this should teach us to treat with less regard those pretensions to good morals, which have been made by some modern professors of Atheistic opinions. Such pretensions are in general hollow and false; but even where they are supported by some external regard to decency, they deserve little respect, and can by no means be admitted in alleviation of the crime of

eradicating the very principles of virtue. He, who teaches immorality, will never want willing hearers; and it is too much to expect, that when a man has by his writing or speaking done all in his power to remove every restraint from the commission of sin in others, he should be allowed any thing like a claim to moral character in himself. It must no doubt be granted, that King David was in the commission of his enormous crimes a high transgressor of the most sacred duties of morality; but guilty as he was, compared to him who preaches unrighteousness, and yet shelters his baseness under a deep veil of hypocrisy, or defies reproof by a shameless profession of infidelity, right reason must acknowledge, that he was a fit and becoming object of the Divine mercy. The mercy, that was extended to David therefore, is no encouragement to sin. He was a sinner, but not a hardened sinner. If he was eminent in crime, he was also no less eminent in contrition. The tears which he shed, the groans which he uttered, the unqualified acknowledgment which he made

of his own criminality, show, that he was far from seeking to justify his conduct, or hide from himself or others its shocking turpitude and depravity. And let it be observed, that the remission of the most awful part of the punishment was not announced to him, till he had made that acknowledgment. Till he made it, his mind indeed bore witness to the truth of that assertion in Scripture, that "the wicked "are like the troubled sea[a]." This he himself tells us; for he describes with a peculiar pathos, in more than one of his penitential exercises, the deep anguish and excruciating torment which he felt, while he "kept" an obstinate "silence[b]" on the subject of his guilt. But even when he had confessed his guilt, though his own mind regained its wonted tranquillity, yet the Almighty took care that His treatment of David should be to no man an apology for transgression. He vindicated in the clearest manner the purity of His own attributes, and gave an eminent proof of his eternal detestation of sin, and of the con-

[a] Isaiah lvii. 20. [b] Psalm xxxii. 3, 4, 5.

sequences which are for ever annexed to it by the order of his providence. The unhappy King was punished, severely and signally, by the rebellion of his darling son, by the general profligacy of his children, and by those various miseries which a profligate and wicked family must necessarily cause to a father, who has any spark of a father's tenderness remaining in his heart: and how must those miseries have been aggravated by the reflection, that his own example had contributed to cherish the wickedness which occasioned them?

The doctrine of our text then stands clear of all exception. Iniquity alone has caused the separation between man and his Maker: nothing else did, and nothing else could have made God regard his creature with any thing but unmixed love and benevolence. The history of our fall makes this clear; and in making this clear, it proves most plainly, that the revelation contained in our Scriptures was intended to impress men with a conviction, that sin ever was and ever will be odious in the sight of God; that He will in every instance visit

it, sooner or later, with those marks of his displeasure, which its own depraved nature and its opposition to his will deserve; and that, as it originally compelled Him to deprive man of his favour, so it will be for ever attended with the same effect, and inevitably bring down upon the impenitent sinner the wrath and indignation of heaven.

SERMON V.

HEB. xii. 14.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

THIS is one of those plain texts of Scripture, which, if they were better considered and better obeyed, would do more for the improvement and happiness of society than all the controversial subtleties, which have ever employed the pens of polemics. Peace and holiness united, would alter, not the appearance only, but the real condition, both of individuals and communities; they would at once put an end to disorder and confusion, by restraining or eradicating those "lusts which war in men's members[a]," and which experience, no less than the authority of God's word, assures us are the

[a] James iv. 1.

original source of all the "wars and fightings" among them. But important as the cultivation of peace always is, (and it never was more important than in these days of ours,) it does not fall in with my present purpose to press this part of the subject upon your consideration; it is the latter branch of the text, to which I beg to draw your attention, as another proof of the Moral Tendency of Divine Revelation, contained in the explicit assertion, that "without holiness no man shall see the "Lord." And how direct a proof it is, cannot but be allowed upon an impartial examination of the matter.

We have already seen, that man was originally holy; that as such he was put in possession of undisturbed happiness; and that he lost that happiness solely by the commission of sin, the transgression of his Maker's law. It comes therefore naturally to be inquired, in the next place, whether there is any hope of a restoration to that happiness; and if there be, upon what conditions and by what means it may be attained. And upon the first view of the

subject, taken in connection with what has been already stated, it would seem in the highest degree probable, that as man lost his happiness in consequence of losing his holiness, he could have no well-grounded hope of being restored to the one, unless he were first restored to the other. The Almighty did from the beginning annex the loss of happiness to the loss of holiness, and by so doing seemed to establish so necessary and indissoluble an union between them, that no descendant of Adam could ever expect to be happy without being holy. If he looked back to his own origin, he would see, that while his forefather continued innocent, he continued in the enjoyment of the Divine favour; but the moment he permitted himself to be seduced from his obedience, he was involved in wretchedness and misery. Seeing then that pain and suffering had entered the world by sin, and that sin was the sole cause of their introduction, it would be natural to conclude, that before the effect could be removed, it would be necessary to remove the cause; and that while the dominion of

sin continued, it would be in vain to expect that pain and suffering should cease to afflict the sons of men. Affliction through life, in various shapes and various degrees, and at last the closing of that life itself in death, were the appointed lot of humanity from the time when it depraved that holy image of God in which it was formed; and unless some means were devised to restore that image, there could appear surely little hope of regaining the happiness, which was therefore lost, because that image had been depraved. Thus it would be natural to reason, supposing we had no further information upon the subject than what we have already considered; the history of man's creation and fall being calculated to impress upon our minds, in a very forcible manner, that holiness and happiness are inseparably connected; that the loss of the former must inevitably be attended with the loss of the latter; and that, if we would again be happy, we must first endeavour to be holy. But thanks be to God, we are not left to our own reasoning upon this important point! It is

agreed by all, who admit the authority of the Revelation contained in the Old and New Testament, that they develope the plan and the means of man's restoration to unalloyed and uninterrupted happiness. Respecting that plan, and those means, there are indeed many and weighty disputes; but no one, calling himself a Christian, will deny, that the end of that great scheme, which the Scriptures unfold, is the salvation of man; his salvation from that penalty of death and damnation to which he was made subject on account of sin, and his restitution to the hope of a blessed immortality by his reinstatement in the Divine favour. But it will surely be well worth our while to inquire, whether the scheme thus unfolded holds out the hope of such a reinstatement, independent of a restoration to holiness, or whether it does not insist upon this restoration as necessary in the first place, before that hope can be reasonably entertained. For it cannot be denied, that to a plain understanding the determination of this question, one way or other, would appear to affect very mate-

rially the moral character of the Revelation itself, and either much to lessen or greatly to enhance its moral bearing on the conduct of those who receive it. If in this inquiry it should be seen, that the scheme of man's restoration to God's favour, as it is laid before us by the authorized expounders of the Divine Will, requires no purification of his mind, and no amendment of his manners; if it holds out a prospect of his attaining to a happiness beyond what he originally enjoyed in Paradise, without his having that holy image renewed in his soul, by which he was distinguished when first placed in that garden of delight; if it represents the face of God as turned to him in mercy, without any demand of better obedience on his part; the inconsistency of such a mode of proceeding, with all that had gone before in the intercourse between man and his Maker, could not but be strongly felt. God had banished his creature from Paradise, and from his own immediate presence, because he had sinned: and could it be supposed possible, that He, whose attribute is Immutability, could again

receive this creature to his favour, while he continued in the very sin for which He had at first banished him from his presence? It is necessary, no doubt, in arguing from the Divine attributes, to proceed with the utmost caution and reserve, not merely because our notions of right and wrong, of just and unjust, are not commensurate to the Divine proceedings, but because, as was before observed, we see only a part of those proceedings, and cannot therefore judge accurately of their bearing upon the whole. But where God himself has been pleased to reveal his Will explicitly, and not only to state what measures He has adopted, but the reason of those measures, there we may with greater assurance affirm, what is or is not consistent with the essential character of the Deity. Thus, when we are told that God deprived man of his happiness in the enjoyment of his favour on account of his transgression, we may infer, without much danger of error, that he cannot be restored to that favour while he persists in the very course by which he originally forfeited it.

This consequence appears to follow so necessarily from the consideration of God's unchangeable nature, and the very idea of consistency and truth, that it cannot be denied without an evident contradiction to the plainest principles of sober reasoning. If man was unfit for Paradise, because he sinned, he must have continued unfit for it as long as he continued to sin; and therefore it became absolutely necessary, that, before he could hope for a restoration to his lost happiness, he should obtain a restoration of his lost holiness. In what way this was to be accomplished, or how little able he was to accomplish it himself, are not now in question; we are only inquiring whether it was not indispensably necessary, for the very vindication of the Divine attributes, that it should be done. That it was, our reason, when fairly consulted, cannot deny; for if sin was a sufficient cause for excluding man from Paradise, when placed there by the munificence of his Creator, it must be for ever a just ground for his exclusion when he had been thrust out of it by the justice of his of-

fended God. Man was placed in Paradise holy; he was turned out when he sinned; and he cannot be readmitted, till he be some way or other made holy again. And to this the plain declarations of holy Writ bear testimony in the fullest and clearest manner. The text is peculiarly explicit: "No man shall see the Lord without holi-"ness." Such is the express proposition which the words contain; and it is impossible to have a more direct proof of any point, than is afforded by this simple and straightforward assertion to the truth for which we are contending. It will readily be allowed, that to "see the Lord," means to be admitted to a participation of that eternal bliss and glory, which our Lord Jesus Christ now enjoys at the right hand of his Father, and a share in which He has promised to bestow upon his faithful followers. It is that beatific vision, in the enjoyment of which the soul is filled with all the happiness of which it is capable. Thus it is said, that "the pure in heart shall see "God[b]," meaning, that they shall partake

[b] Matth. v. 8.

of those heavenly "pleasures which are at "His right hand for evermore[c]." And the propriety of this mode of expression is evident. God is the fountain of all good whatever; and therefore the nearer any creature is permitted to approach Him, the higher must be its enjoyment of what is really conducive to its well-being. To be driven from his presence is misery; to be admitted to it is supreme felicity; and as to know God is the perfection of knowledge, so to see Him is the summit of enjoyment. But if so, then the text is a plain assertion, on the authority of the Holy Spirit, that this happiness is not to be attained by any one who has not first attained the holiness which it clearly requires. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and as every man lost that holiness by the corruption contracted by his forefather, and still more by his own transgression of the Divine Law, it follows necessarily, that there must be a restoration to holiness before there can be a restoration to happiness. For the text is express, that holiness

[c] Rom. xvi. 11.

must be attained; that there can be no admission into heaven without it; and that to hope for such admission, without this indispensable qualification, would be the grossest self-deceit.

But this important truth, important in every respect, not in itself only, and its immediate consequences, but in its influence upon the entire cast and character of man, does not rest upon any single text, however explicit, nor even upon an accumulation of texts, nor upon the inferences deduced from them; it forms rather the great leading idea which runs through the whole of Revelation, upon which the plan itself is made to turn, and to which all its propositions and declarations directly tend, as to their ultimate object. It appears in that first gracious announcement, by which the Almighty, remembering mercy in the midst of his just wrath [d], declared to man, that he should yet get the better of his adversary, and obtain in his turn a triumph over him. The triumph of Satan over Adam consisted in this, that he had seduced him

[d] Psalm lxxviii. 38, 39.

from the service of his Maker, and made him wretched by making him sinful. The promised victory, which should rescue him from the power of the deceiver, implied clearly, that the mischief, which he had occasioned, should in some way or other be repaired; and as that mischief consisted primarily in destroying man's original holiness, and that Divine image in which he was created, it could not be effectually repaired, unless by the restoration of that image. The first work of the Devil, as connected with our race, was drawing them into sin; and as long as they continued sinful, so long did his work continue to prosper; nor does there appear any way, by which his success could be disputed, or his defeat be manifested, but by reinstating man in that condition of purity and innocence from which he had seduced him by persuading him to sin. The promise therefore, that this success should not continue, and that the time would come when the defeat of our adversary should be made evident, would not seem to be fulfilled, unless the pollution which he had intro-

duced into our nature by sin were purified, and the image of God restored in the soul of man. If the triumph of the Devil consisted in the destruction of human happiness by the introduction of sin, his defeat must necessarily require the renewing of that happiness by the removal of sin, and the reproduction of the holiness which it had polluted. And thus it would appear, that the very first intimation of mercy, which conveyed to our forefather a hope of pardon for his guilt, conveyed at the same time an intimation no less clear, that the corruption which had been infused into him should be purified, and the holiness he had lost should be restored. Pardon to the transgressor, without a removal of the cause whence his transgression proceeded, would leave to him, who is the adversary of God and man, more than half his triumph; it would leave him the horrid satisfaction of knowing that the poison, which he had conveyed into the human mind, had not been expelled, but was still in full force; while the mercy, which had rescued man from punishment without cleansing

him from guilt, would seem to insinuate, that God could behold iniquity[e] without abhorrence. That alone would be a complete triumph, that alone would answer the promise, that the "serpent's head[f]" should be "bruised," which should demolish his whole work, by not only pardoning the object of his treachery, and reinstating him in happiness, but by expelling that venom which had contaminated his soul, and the renewing of its original uprightness and integrity. But if this view of the subject be correct, if it be proper to say, that the promised triumph over the author of our sin and misery would be incomplete, unless both the sin and the misery were removed, then it is evident, that the Divine Revelation, whose authority we admit, does in its very outset inculcate the necessity of our moral renovation; it lays this with the very first basis of human salvation, and makes the same promise, which gives us a hope of deliverance from punishment, the assurance also of our being delivered from the power and the guilt of sin.

[e] Hab. i. 13. [f] Gen. iii. 15.

Thus deeply is the principle of man's restoration to integrity rooted in our holy religion; thus early was it intimated, that before he could again "see that Lord," from whose presence he was banished, he must regain the holiness he had lost.

But this principle is not confined to the commencement of Revelation; it is uniformly kept in view, and uninterruptedly maintained, throughout the whole scheme of our religion. In the Law and in the Gospel it is prominently conspicuous; and even before the direct promulgation of either, the example of those holy men, who are said to have been peculiarly acceptable to Almighty God, proves clearly, that it was their integrity which made them acceptable. Thus it was in the case of Enoch, a case remarkable for this, that he was received to the enjoyment of heavenly bliss, without paying that penalty to which the sons of Adam became subject on his transgression. But if it be asked, why he escaped it, we are directed by the word of truth to answer, on account of his holiness; he "walked with God," and therefore "God

"took him[g]." That the phrase of "walk-"ing with God," means leading a life of peculiar integrity and holiness, requires no proof; it is understood at once as implying some preeminent excellence of character. To "walk with God" must signify either to be admitted to a more familiar intercourse with Him, or to be conformed in an especial manner to his Will; and in either case it will convey to us the idea of a more than ordinary sanctity. He who is admitted into God's more immediate presence, cannot but be supposed in a high degree holy. But that the latter is the real meaning of the phrase appears from this, that it is a description of his manner of living while in this world; the mode of expression evidently conveying this sense, that he walked with God here, and therefore God took him to Himself in heaven. He was a pattern of purity, devotion, and righteousness; and it was intended to exhibit him as such, and to show by his example how acceptable these graces were to the Almighty. It is thus that St.

[g] Gen. v. 22, 24. See Patrick in loc.

Paul interprets this passage, when he says, that Enoch had an assurance of his having pleased God[h]; that assurance being nothing else but this testimony to the uniform piety of his life. It is in the same phrase that the Almighty himself condescended to speak, when He said to Abraham, "Walk "before me, and be thou perfect[i];" intimating, that he would then be "perfect," when he lived as in the immediate presence of God, and with an undeviating regard to his Will.

The example of Enoch then is calculated to impress us, in a very forcible manner, with the excellence and value of a holy life, to teach us what manner of persons they are, upon whom the especial favour of God can be expected to descend. For this holy man was exempt from the common lot of humanity; that death, which reigned in general without control, was not allowed to visit him with its agonies or terrors. And why? Because he had walked with God; because he had ever lived under a sense of the Divine presence; be-

[h] Heb. xi. 5. [i] Gen. xvii. 1.

cause he had ever conformed himself to the Divine Will, and never allowed his passions to rebel against the Law of his God; therefore God took him. He took him to himself; and thus gave the world a lesson, which the plainest understanding might comprehend, that, if they wished to recover that original glory and happiness which Adam lost, they must seek it by earnest endeavours after the recovery of that integrity and holiness, to which the delights of Paradise were annexed, and to which alone they were adapted. But though this example of antediluvian virtue is so remarkable in itself, and in its reward, as to deserve to be thus prominently produced and contemplated, this important question by no means depends upon the force of any individual example whatever. The necessity of holiness in all, who would approach God, or hope for his favour, is a principle which pervades, as I have already said, the whole, both of the Law and the Gospel. It will be proper to consider each separately and distinctly.

The Law then does most clearly, in all

its declarations and by all its provisions, insist upon this, that they who wish to draw near to God, must be careful to cleanse and to purify themselves from every thing that is in any degree polluted; it proceeds throughout upon the principle, that nothing unholy can be permitted to appear before God. This principle is exemplified in the very first interview, if I may so speak, between the Almighty and the person to whom He was about to give a commission as his delegated messenger to his people. "Put off thy shoes from off thy "feet; for the place whereon thou stand-"est is holy ground[k]," was an address intended, doubtless, to impress upon the mind of Moses, as it was well calculated to do, the pure and immaculate nature of that Great Being, who was not only holy in himself, but required an answerable holiness in all who were admitted to his presence. The principle thus established, in the first intimation of his appointment to the future Legislator, was steadily and uniformly maintained. When the people of

[k] Exod. iii. 5.

Israel were pronounced to be "a peculiar "treasure[1]" to God, they were at the same time denominated "an holy nation;" they could not be the one without being the other; they could not be "peculiar" to God, and belong more nearly to Him than the other nations of the earth, unless they were sanctified, and distinguished above others for the purity of their morals and the ardour of their piety. The Law of God could not even be received by any but holy men. When it was now about to be delivered, and Mount Sinai was to be enveloped in that overpowering splendor, which was no less pure than it was awful, the people are charged to keep at a due distance, lest their uncleanness should offend that Holy Being who condescended to address them; the priests were commanded to sanctify themselves with peculiar care, as they were the appointed intercessors for their people; and Moses and Aaron alone were thought worthy to come up unto the Lord, because they alone were invested with the holiness indispensably required in

[1] Exod. xix. 5, 6.

those who were to stand before the Almighty. In Aaron, indeed, as the head of the priesthood, this necessity was exemplified in a very striking manner. He was set apart, or consecrated to his office by a most solemn and imposing ceremony, calculated to inspire awful sentiments of the preparation requisite to appear before the Deity with acceptance; to teach man, that being a Holy God, He could be served only by holy persons. To this was directed all the care bestowed upon his different vestments, but above all upon that prominent part of them, which, on "a plate of "pure gold," bore this remarkable inscription, "Holiness to the Lord[m]." This plate, thus inscribed, was to be "always" upon Aaron's "forehead," when he presented the hallowed gifts of the children of Israel, that by this emblem of holiness their iniquity might be covered, and they themselves might "be accepted before the "Lord." But the sanctity thus required to render the service of the Tabernacle acceptable, was not confined to the persons

[m] Exod. xxviii. 36—38.

of those who officiated; it was extended also to the time and place in which that service was to be performed. The Sabbath was a holy day, the Tabernacle was a holy house, and all the vessels and instruments employed were invested with the same sacred character. If it be said, as no doubt it may, that all this was merely typical and relative, the assertion to a certain extent cannot be denied. It cannot be denied, that all these things were not really and inherently holy, some of them not being capable of that spiritual purity which seems to be required, and others falling miserably short of it. But though the holiness required in this legal service was thus typical and relative, as well from the defectiveness of the Law itself, as from the infirmity of the subjects to whom it was addressed, yet even in this defective condition, it showed the necessity of a real holiness to all who would approach God in a manner really acceptable. When it was required, that every thing, which was consecrated to God's service, should be invested with a holy character, it was inti-

mated clearly, that holiness, in the sense in which it was capable of it, was necessary to every creature before it could presume to appear before its immaculate Creator; and though by its nature it might not admit of true spiritual holiness, yet as far as it could be made holy, it was necessary that it should. This lesson was taught even by the meanest vessel, which was consecrated to a holy use. And if the priests themselves did not learn that lesson; if they contented themselves with an external sanctity, and rested in the mere letter of their Law without improving it to that spiritual sense, of which it was capable; if, serving in an earthly tabernacle, and looking only to the visible glory it contained, they extended not their views to that heavenly abode, where alone the real presence of God was to be enjoyed; it must be said, without reserve, that they misunderstood and misused those numerous emblematic purifications which were enjoined them. Strictly speaking, the Law in itself perfected nothing[n]; it was temporary in its na-

[n] Heb. vii. 19.

ture, and therefore defective in its operation[o]. It was founded on temporal hopes

[o] See J. Smith's Select Discourses. Bull. Harm. Apost. D. P. c. x. sect. 8. It would go a great way towards settling many important points of controversy, and removing the very causes from which they arise, if the real nature of the Mosaic dispensation were duly examined and thoroughly understood. That it was intended only *ad interim*, as an intermediate and temporary institution, the Apostle very clearly intimates; and if so, there seems little difficulty in allowing, that it was founded *per se* on temporary sanctions. But it does not follow, because in that dispensation temporal success was made the reward of virtue, and temporal adversity the punishment of vice, and because an earthly Canaan was held out as the land of promise, that therefore those, who lived under it, knew nothing of any other rewards or punishments, or did not carry their views to a higher scene of things. Nothing is clearer than that the great truths of religion had been originally communicated to the fathers of the human race. The excellent Chrysostom takes notice of this; and remarks it as a sign of God's peculiar regard for the eminent characters of the first ages of the world. Καὶ γὰρ, says he, τῷ Νωὲ καὶ τῷ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ τοῖς ἐγγόνοις τοῖς ἐκείνου καὶ τῷ Ἰὼβ.....οὐ διὰ γραμματῶν διελέγετο, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς δι' ἑαυτοῦ, καθαρὰν εὑρίσκων αὐτῶν τὴν διάνοιαν. It was not therefore necessary to the Mosaic dispensation, strictly so called, and as it related to the Jewish polity, that it should inculcate expressly all the general principles of religion, which, having been previously promulgated, might have been sufficiently known; but noticing them only incidentally and obscurely, that it should address itself to

and supported by temporal sanctions; not that the holy men, who lived under the

the establishment of such a community as might answer the end which it immediately had in view. But though Moses was not the minister of the Gospel, it does not follow that he was ignorant of its leading truths, or that he abstained from occasionally intimating those truths in his writings. To say, that it made no part of his plan as the Lawgiver of the Jews, is one thing, and to say that it is nowhere to be found in his writings, is another. When therefore an ingenious and learned writer asserted, that the doctrine of a future state made no part of the Law of Moses, the assertion need not have alarmed the best friend of revelation; it was capable of a sound interpretation by a proper distinction of terms. But when in support of his hypothesis he deemed it necessary to alter the received arrangement of the sacred writings, and urged that hypothesis as an argument against the early date assigned to the Book of Job, he forgot, surely, that God had freely conversed with man previous to the Divine Legation of Moses. This case, when fairly stated, proves quite the contrary to what the learned author wished to establish. For a due regard to the revealed history of man would induce us to conclude, that the earlier any author wrote before the promulgation of Christianity, the clearer would be his ideas of religious truth; as far, I mean, as uninspired knowledge could carry him. And it should always be remembered, in considering this question, that the promise, the evangelical promise of salvation through Christ, had been made expressly to Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the Law. If therefore any descendant of his was ignorant of it, or

Mosaic dispensation, were ignorant of a future life, or uninfluenced by its prospects, but that the Law of Moses, considered by itself, did not and was not intended to "bring life and immortality to light[p]." It was added, as the Apostle informs us, because of transgressions, as a proper mode of discipline to restrain in some degree the corruption of men, till the time came for the full display of divine truth. It was not therefore to be wondered at, if in some of its ordinances it rather obscurely and figuratively intimated the "holiness, without "which no man shall see the Lord," than expressly and plainly insisted upon it. In fact, as the learned Dr. Hammond has well remarked[q], "the Law had a twofold

did not believe it, it was not for want of revealed instruction respecting it.

[p] 2 Tim. i. 10.

[q] Practical Catechism, p. 8, 9. Thus also the learned Mede, with his usual force and perspicuity. "For "the better understanding of this, we must know *what* "*a covenant is*, and *what are the kinds thereof. A cove-* "*nant is, as it were, a bargain between God and man,* "*wherein God promises some spiritual good to us, so we* "*perform some duty unto him, if not, then to incur ever-* "*lasting punishment.* This *covenant* is of two sorts;

" aspect; on one side it represented to its " observers that original law and first cove-

" the one is called the *Covenant of Works*, the other " the *Covenant of Grace*. The *Covenant of Works* is, " wherein God on his part makes us a promise of eter- " nal life, if we on our part shall perform exact obe- " dience unto his Law; otherwise to be everlastingly " condemned, if we fail. The *Covenant of Grace* or *of* " *the Gospel* is, wherein God on his part promises us " sinners Christ to be our Saviour and Redeemer, if we " on our part shall believe on him with a lively and " obedient faith; otherwise to be condemned. The " *Covenant of Works* God made with man at his crea- " tion, when he was able to have kept the conditions he " required; but he through his disobedience broke it, " and so became liable to death both corporal and spi- " ritual. And though the *Covenant of Grace* then took " place.....yet was the former *Covenant of Works* still " in force, until Christ, who was promised, should come " in the flesh. And therefore was this covenant re- " newed under Moses with the Israelites, when the " Law was given in Horeb, as Moses says, Deut. v. 2. " *The Lord made a covenant with us in Horeb.* For all " the time, under the Law, the *open* and *apparent cove-* " *nant* was *the Covenant of Works*, to make them the " more to see their own misery and condemnation, and " so to long after Christ, who was yet to come, and at " whose coming this obligation should be quite can- " celled: yet, nevertheless, with this *open* covenant there " was a *secret* and *hidden* covenant, which was the *Co-* " *venant of Grace;* that they might not be altogether " without the means of salvation whilst Christ yet tar- " ried. This truth is plain, Galat. iii. 17, &c. where

" nant which God made with Adam in Pa-
" radise, and which demanded unsinning
" obedience; and on the other it carried the
" mind forward to that second covenant of
" mercy, in which, as the terms of acceptance
" would be less rigid, so the means of fulfil-
" ling them would be more ample and more
" efficient." But viewed in either light, it still taught the same lesson of God's hatred of sin and love of integrity. In its moral precepts, rightly understood, it deserved clearly the character given it by St. Paul of " holy, just, and good[r];" and if from the

" the Apostle affirms, that the Covenant of Grace in
" Christ was four hundred and thirty years *afore the Law*
" *was given*, and that therefore *the Law could not disannul*
" *it*, or *make it of none effect;* but that *the Law* (so he
" calls the Covenant of Works) *was* only *added* to it *be-*
" *cause of transgressions, until the blessed seed should*
" *come*, ver. 19. and that it might be a *schoolmaster to*
" *bring us unto Christ*, ver. 24. For in the *moral* Law
" of God, under whose curse they stood bound, they
" might as in a glass see their sin, their guilt, their
" want of righteousness; and in their *ceremonies* and
" *sacrifices* they might again, as in shadows of heavenly
" things, behold the means of their reconciliation,
" through his blood who was to be slain and offered to
" God for them." Disc. XLV. Works, p. 251.

[r] Rom. vii. 12.

weakness of man it failed to make him like itself, it must yet have impressed him with a sense, that the God, who gave so good a Law, and insisted upon its being obeyed, was himself good, and could take delight in nothing but what was just. And even in its typical institutions, it was designed evidently to carry the mind beyond itself, and to impress it with higher and purer ideas. All its ablutions, and all its sacrifices; all its sacramental rites, and all the care which it prescribed before any sacred work should be entered upon, proceeded upon this plain principle, that God could not be approached without preparation; and that the preparation required was intended to remove what was displeasing to Him, and to supply what was approved in his sight. However these rites may be conceived to be merely ceremonial, and however confined in their effect, still they were calculated to instruct those who used them in this truth, that the God whom they approached was a Holy God, and required holiness of some kind or other in those who presumed to draw near to Him. Their

notions of that holiness might be gross and carnal, but some notion they must have had, that the Being, who commanded them so carefully to cleanse themselves before they appeared in his presence, was in his nature essentially and peculiarly pure, that He hated sin and delighted in goodness. Every thing they heard and saw tended to inspire them with this idea. His people were a holy people; his priesthood was a holy priesthood, set apart for his service by much and solemn preparation; his house was a holy house, and even in that house, though the whole of it was holy, yet the part which was honoured by the more immediate display of the Divine glory was distinguished by a correspondent increase of sanctity. In every step which men took towards God, they were called upon to purify themselves, and the nearer any one was permitted to approach to Him, the greater was the necessity of his being cleansed from sin, and the greater was the holiness with which it was necessary he should be invested. All this might no doubt be suffered to pass away without effect;

but it cannot be denied, that one clear principle is distinctly marked throughout, that the holiness of God's nature is displayed in a striking manner, and that the lesson is again and again inculcated, that no man can come to Him acceptably without in some degree participating in his holiness.

But if this be evident in the Law, which, being temporary in its very nature, was not "able to make the comers thereunto "perfect[s]," it is pressed upon us with tenfold force by that holy Gospel, which completed the revelation of God's will to man. Under this dispensation, the necessity of holiness to acceptance with God is set before men in the fullest and clearest manner: it commences with a demand, that all who would receive it should duly and diligently prepare themselves, and its consummation is declared to be the perfection of holiness[t].

The commencement of the Gospel, in our present view of the subject, must be

[s] Heb. x. 1.

[t] 2 Cor. vii. 1. 1 Tim. i. 5. Tit. ii. 14.

dated from the first appearance of John the Baptist, as the authorized forerunner of our Saviour: for though from our Lord's own declaration, that "the least in the "kingdom of heaven was greater than "John[u]," we may conclude justly, that John himself was not in that kingdom, yet will it assist us materially to understand the nature of the Christian dispensation, and the important ends it was intended to answer, if we can first thoroughly comprehend the kind of preparation which was necessary for admission into it. John was expressly the preacher of that preparation. And what was it? What was its nature, what its object, and what its effect? The preaching of the Baptist was in few and simple terms; he called upon men to repent, to perform a duty which in its nature required a change of mind and purpose, which had for its object to turn man from the pursuit of sin, and the only genuine effect of which was amendment of life and manners. And he called them to perform this duty, because "the kingdom of hea-

[u] Matth. xi. 11.

"ven was at hand[x];" intimating plainly enough, that if they would enter into it, and hope to participate in its advantages, they must previously repent. But the Baptist's call to repentance, as a duty necessary before admission into the kingdom of heaven, showed clearly what kind of a kingdom it was intended to be. Repentance did in its nature imply the renunciation of sin; and as this renunciation was to be made previous to men's entering into the announced kingdom, as sin was thus peremptorily required to be deposited at the very entrance into the Church of Christ, it was a plain declaration, that the design of Him, who was about to found that church and kingdom, was to exclude from it all sin and wickedness. That such was his design, men might judge with sufficient assurance from the message which preceded his approach; for it is thus that they judge of each other's intentions in their worldly undertakings. If, when men invite their followers to join them, they demand any specific preparation, we can

[x] Matth. iii. 2. Luke iii. 16, 17.

form, without much risk of error, an adequate idea of their ultimate purposes. It is by the proper application of the same principles of common sense, that we shall most accurately judge of the truths of Religion also. It is not by the use of reason, but by the indulgence of self-conceit, that the human mind falls into error. Reason is the lamp of God in the soul of man; and though this, like all the gifts bestowed upon men, may be abused, yet we can no more judge without the exercise of our reason, than we can see without opening our eyes. The fair deductions of reason are equally important, and can no more be deviated from with impunity, in matters of religion, than in the affairs of common life. And thus must we come to a correct decision on the case before us. When we gather from all the previous arrangements, that the intention of our Lord was to exclude sin from his kingdom, we are by no means at liberty to neglect this mode of arriving at the truth, or to lessen the weight of argument which it affords; in other things we should acknowledge its validity,

and we are bound to acknowledge it here. Let it be impartially considered, and its force cannot but be allowed. God Almighty sent his Messenger before his Son to prepare men for being received into his kingdom: and how did he prepare them? Did he call upon them to get wealth or power, or even learning itself, as a qualification for being admitted? No: he called upon them to do nothing but to quit their sins; in every other respect he left them as he found them, whether rich or poor, whether learned or unlearned, whether high or low: they might come in all points as they were, except that they must not bring their sins with them: these were decidedly inadmissible; and whatever men might be, yet if they did not renounce their sins, into the kingdom of heaven they could not come. And is it possible to conceive any method better calculated to impress men with a deep sense of the holy nature of that kingdom, than this of declaring, that no sin, and no man adhering to sin, could be received into it? Extreme inattention could alone be insensible to the weight of

this argument, and hypocrisy alone could elude it. Sin and holiness are directly opposed to each other, and where sin was expelled, there it must follow of course, that holiness and integrity would be paramount. And here it is impossible not to remark the unity and consistency of all the Divine proceedings. We have before seen, that man lost Paradise by falling into sin; and now that a dispensation was clearly announced, by which a way was to be made for his return to the happiness he had lost, the very first step, which is taken for his restitution, is to inform him, that he must renounce sin before he can have any hope of being reinstated in the Divine favour. The introduction of sin was the introduction of misery; and unless that sin was removed, the misery must still continue to be felt. However merciful God was, however inclined to pity and relieve his fallen and unhappy creature, still his own essential nature continued the same, and his hatred of sin could neither be changed nor diminished. Man was banished from his presence because he sinned; and while he

adhered to sin, he could not be readmitted into his presence. The Divine counsel continued immutable in this, that no iniquity could be admitted into his kingdom; and though a way was now about to be opened, by which sinful man might regain his Maker's favour, yet even before that way was fully revealed, it was clearly and expressly and decidedly declared, that it would be incompatible with a perseverance in any kind of transgression. But that not a shadow of doubt might remain on this subject, that no one should have the least pretence for making the mercy of the Gospel an excuse for his wickedness, the Author of that Gospel, and the Founder of that kingdom of which the Baptist had announced the approach only, commenced his own preaching precisely in the same way. His call was to repentance; and He did not hesitate to say, that to make that call was one great end of his coming into the world[z]. This was the first step in his system of Religion: till this was taken, no advance whatever could be made. He,

[z] Matth. ix. 13.

who came to deliver man from the fatal effects of his sin, made it his first care to deliver him from the sin itself. The first Adam brought it into the world[a]; the second began his great work of restoration by absolutely forbidding its intrusion into his kingdom. And as He did himself, so He ordered his disciples to do. The twelve Apostles, on their first mission, "went out, "and preached that men should repent[b]." St. Peter, when asked what they should do who wished to be saved, exhorted them to "repent[c]." St. Paul, immediately on his conversion, was "not disobedient to the "heavenly vision;" and the proof that he was not disobedient was this, that he "showed" to all whom he addressed, "that "they should repent and turn to God, and "do works meet for repentance[d]." Thus fully and expressly does our Lord insist by Himself, by his forerunner, and by his Apostles, upon the necessity, that all, who would come to Him for salvation, should first renounce sin, should turn from dark-

[a] Rom. v. 12. [b] Mark vi. 12. [c] Acts ii. 38.
[d] Acts xxvi. 18, 19, 20.

ness and from the power of Satan, under which they and their forefathers had fallen by transgression, to the service of God and obedience to his laws. Should it appear to any person, that I insist too much upon so plain a proposition as the necessity of repentance, I beg to observe, that were this one point clearly and duly enforced, it would strike at the root of many errors and misconceptions, as to the doctrines of the Gospel, and more particularly as to the manner of stating and explaining them. For if a renunciation of sin be necessary, even before our profession of Christianity; if it be required as an indispensable qualification, even at the very threshold of the Christian temple; and if, till we get rid of this incumbrance, we are not even admissible into the list of Christ's soldiers and servants, then certainly no doctrine can be true, and no interpretation can be correct, which does in any degree or any manner encourage a continuance in sin, or make the conscience easy while it does continue in it. Since we are plainly told to leave our sins behind us at our entrance into the

Christian Church, any attempt to make the faith taught in that Church consistent with an adherence to sin, must be a most gross misrepresentation of the truth, and a most criminal abuse of Divine instruction.

Clear however and important as this is, the necessity of holiness to final acceptance with God does by no means rest upon it. Repentance being laid as the foundation, the superstructure of Christian virtue is then to be commenced. Our Lord himself declares expressly, that his Law was more spiritual, more holy, and more extended, than even the most precise explanations of duty which had been delivered before[e]; it required greater purity, and searched deeper into the thoughts of men, and took a larger range in its injunctions. When the Psalmist tells us, that "the Law "of the Lord is perfect, converting the "soul;" and that "the commandment of "the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes[f];" he speaks by a kind of anticipation of that

[e] Matth. v. 20.

[f] Psalm xix. 8. and Bishop Sherlock's elegant Comment.

sanctifying of the Spirit, which the Gospel would command and produce in all its faithful professors, and which it did produce in himself, and in "all them that "looked for redemption in Jerusalem[g]." The Revelation made by Christ, being the consummation of all previous intimations of the Divine Will, was also the fulness of truth and the perfection of morals. In this sense and with this view the Author of our Religion declares, that no empty professions of attachment to his person[h], no complimentary addresses, no hypocritical attempts to substitute words for actions, would be acceptable to Him, or entitle those who used them to a share in the salvation which He announced. He demanded of all his followers, sincere uniform obedience in thought, word, and deed to the Will of his Father: He demanded of them, that they should do that Will; not that they should know it merely, not that they should admire it, not that they should praise it; but that they should do it; that it should be the rule of their actions, and the guide of

[g] Luke ii. 38. [h] Matth. vii. 21.

their lives; that whatever it forbids them, from that they should refrain; whatever it enjoins them, that they should perform. And this not externally, but internally; not only in the outward act, but in the inward intention. The Will of God revealed in the Gospel is designed to regulate the affections, to correct the temper, to keep the passions within due bounds, and direct them to proper objects, and to give its professors "a clean heart and a right spirit." It is thus that it is to be done. For St. Paul tells us, that "the Will of God is our "sanctification," and that "we should "possess these vessels of ours in honour;" because we are "called to holiness[i]." The Apostle indeed in this place confines his attention to one particular instance of duty, but the "sanctification," which he informs us is the express "will of God," and the "holiness," to which he says we are "call-"ed," are to be understood certainly as extending to all the affections of the soul, and as requiring in them all a due order and purity. But it would be unpardonable not

[i] 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4—7.

to remark the force of the Apostle's expression, we are "*called* to holiness:" in modern language we should express the same idea by saying, that holiness was our profession. It is thus we say, that divinity is the profession of a clergyman, that medicine is the profession of a physician, and that arms are the profession of a soldier: and it is readily understood and allowed, that whatever is a man's profession, to that he is bound to devote his time and attention, and in that it is expected he has made a proficiency. And precisely in this sense does the Scripture represent holiness to be the profession of a Christian; not merely that his profession is a holy profession, but that the very object and essence of the profession itself is holiness. To this Christians are called, this is their business, this they are to cultivate continually, this is the mark to which all their endeavours should be directed. Sin they renounced at their very entrance on this profession; and having renounced sin, they were prepared to commence the practice of holiness: so well is the business of our moral improvement

arranged, so clearly is the intention of the Gospel to secure that improvement set before us, if we would but attend to its plain intimations! And not only by plain intimations and the clearest inferences is this improvement required from us, but by express and positive injunctions. Our Lord bids us "be perfect[k]." His great Apostle made it his own practice, by the use of suitable means[l], to purify continually the remaining corruptions of his nature, and "forgetting the things behind, to reach "forth unto those before[m];" and his earnest advice to his followers is, that they should "cleanse themselves from all filthi-"ness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holi-"ness in the fear of the Lord[n]." St. Peter leaves this as his last injunction, "Grow in "grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord "and Saviour Jesus Christ[o]." All these expressions clearly imply, that it is a Christian's duty to endeavour after improvement in those virtues which the Gospel requires of him; that he ought diligently to prac-

[k] Matt. v. 48. [l] 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. [m] Philip. iii. 13. [n] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [o] 2 Peter iii. 18.

tise them, and make it his object to fix in his mind such habits as are most conformable to piety and goodness. It is by such conduct alone that man is taught to hope for the attainment of that happiness which the Gospel sets before him. As he lost Paradise by sin, so he is plainly told, that he can only recover it by holiness [p]. And that beloved disciple, to whom was revealed the various fortunes of the Christian Church, and who had a view of that final consummation of all things, which should place one part of mankind in the glory of the New Jerusalem, and consign the other to the lake of fire and brimstone, has been commissioned so to instruct us respecting our ultimate destination, as to make it impossible for any man to expect future happiness without present holiness. His description of the New Jerusalem, and of those who shall be admitted into it, is precise and perspicuous. He declares explicitly, that "there shall in no wise enter "into it any thing that defileth, neither "whatsoever worketh abomination, or

[p] Matth. xxv. 46.

"maketh a lie[q]:" nothing unclean, nothing contrary to the purity and the truth of God. Those alone who have paid a due attention to the injunctions of the Gospel, those alone who have obeyed the Will of God, by seeking to fulfil it in the sanctification of their souls and bodies, shall be allowed to pass the barriers of this holy city. "Blessed," says the inspired Apostle, (and he knew the mind of his beloved Master,) "blessed are they that do "his commandments, that they may have "right to the Tree of Life, and may enter "in through the gates[r]." And thus we see, with a clearness that can admit of no doubt or cavil, that when the gates of that happy abode, which were shut against our first parent on account of his transgression, were again to be thrown open, it was especially provided, that they should be opened upon the same principle upon which they were shut, a regard to moral truth and virtue, hatred to sin, and love to goodness. The attributes of God are ever the same; He is ever holy, just, and good; and as his

[q] Rev. xxi. 27. [r] Rev. xxii. 14.

displeasure is excited against sin alone, so his favour can only be extended to such as have renounced iniquity, and have honestly endeavoured, to the utmost of their power, to cultivate the righteousness and integrity which alone He loves.

There is however a question, which it would be improper altogether to overlook on this occasion, and the decision of which is indeed of great importance. It is this: Is the holiness, for which we have been contending, and which has been proved to be so necessary to our acceptance with God, an inherent or an imputed holiness? If it be the latter, its being insisted upon so much in the holy Scriptures will not prove the moral tendency of the Revelation they contain. But that it is a real inherent holiness, infused into the soul, and issuing out in substantial virtue, is clear from this, that it is capable of improvement by exercise and practice, and that it is said to consist in the conformity of our thoughts, words, and actions to the Will of God. For this plainly implies such an internal quality of the mind, as not only af-

fects the character, but regulates the life, and gives the tone to our feelings and affections. It is the kingdom of God within us. The doctrine of imputed righteousness is supported certainly by great names, and has been adopted by good men; and as it was understood by them may perhaps be capable of a sense not inconsistent with sound morality. But it is capable also of an interpretation pernicious in itself, and most dangerous in its tendency. In the sense in which it is really to be found in Scripture, it means precisely that justification by which Almighty God is pleased, for Christ's sake, to account one, who was a sinner, a righteous man on his repentance. But when it is said, that the righteousness of Christ is wholly imputed to us, an assertion is made, for which as there is no ground[s] in the word of God, so is it ap-

[s] On this subject the learned Grabe, in his Annotations on Bishop Bull's Harm. Apost. has the following excellent observations. "Si id velint," says he, "Deum justitiam Christi imputare fidelibus in remis-"sionem peccatorum, ita ut præterita crimina et præ-"sentia delicta quasi pro non factis habeantur, dicunt, "quod S. Scripturæ congruum et a ratione non est

parently inconsistent with the whole scheme of our redemption, inconsistent with the

" alienum:.....ast si justitiam Christi a fidelibus ita " apprehendi ac a Deo ipsis ita imputari contendant, ut " propria eorum justitia formaliter fiat ac ex ea justi a " Deo pronuntientur, tum istud asserunt quod sanæ ra- " tioni.....repugnat, et in S. Scriptura nuspiam doce- " tur." Annot. in D. prior. cap. iii. p. 416. But the Bishop himself, in his Examen Censuræ, p. 557. has largely and satisfactorily illustrated this important question. " De justitia Christi nobis imputata primo in " loco agendum est. Atque primum de phrasi ipsa, " qua justitia Christi nobis imputari dicitur, inquiren- " dum. 1. Certum est, locutionem illam in Scripturis " nusquam occurrere. 2. Æque manifestum est, ipsam " in plerisque iisque nobilissimis Ecclesiarum Reforma- " tarum Confessionibus omnino desiderari. De impu- " tatione justitiæ Christi ne γρὺ quidem reperias, vel " in nostra Confessione, vel in Augustana, Argenti- " nensi, Wirtenbergica, Bohemica, Belgica, &c. Qui " igitur in alterutrâ harum Ecclesiarum vivit, is vi sub- " scriptionis suæ non tenetur istiusmodi locutionem " amplecti; sed liberum ei est disquirere, quatenus " phrasis illa Scripturis et rectæ rationi congruat aut " disconveniat. 3. Observandum est, phrasin illam pes- " sime congruere cum locutione Scripturæ notissima, " qua fides dicitur homini in justitiam imputari, Rom. " iv. 3, 5, 6, 22, 23, 24. Nam locutio illa sensu alio " accipi non potest, quam hoc, quod Deus in Evangelio " fidem nostram (nempe δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργούμενην, ut Pau- " lus ipse se explicat) pro justitia nostra reputat, et " præmio remunerandam censet. Non itaque justitia " Christi, sed fides nostra, nobis imputatur in justitiam.

very sacrifice Christ himself made for sin upon the cross, and with the sanctifying

" Quare? An propter rei ipsius dignitatem? Absit: sed " propter solam Jesu Christi satisfactionem meritoriam, " qua e Deo impetravit, ut sub hac conditione justitiæ " ac salutis fieremus participes. Itaque juxta Scriptu- " ras justitia Christi proprie id non est (N. B.) quod " imputatur, sed id propter quod imputatur nobis fides " nostra in justitiam. 4. Denique apprime notandum, " (quod dudum observavit vir doctissimus,) phrasin, qua " Christi justitia nobis imputari dicitur, si rigide acci- " piatur, consistere non posse cum illa, quæ propriam " et genuinam Ecclesiarum Reformatarum sententiam " exprimit, qua nempe justitia nobis imputari dicitur " propter Christi meritum et obedientiam. Nam si " utrumque in vigore velimus verum esse, necesse est " dicamus *justitiam Christi nobis imputari propter justi-* " *tiam Christi;* quæ locutio manifestam in se habet ἀκυ- " ρολογίαν. Sed de phrasi satis; de re ipsa jam videbi- " mus.

" Catholica doctrina est, fidem, pœnitentiam, spem, " dilectionem, cæterasque virtutes et bona opera nostra, " nequaquam per se aut merito suo ad id valere ut quis " justificetur, hoc est, a peccatis suis prius commissis " absolvatur, a Deo tanquam justus tractetur, ipsique " ad salutem vitamque æternam gratus acceptusque ha- " beatur; sed illud totum unice deberi meritoriæ Jesu " Christi satisfactioni, utpote qua sola gratiosum fœdus " (quod *Evangelium* vocatur) impetratum ac sancitum " fuerit, juxta quod sub æquissimis illis conditionibus, " justificationis ac salutis participes fieri possimus. Ita " Ecclesia nostra, Art. 11. *Justi coram Deo reputamur,* " *non propter opera aut merita nostra, sed tantum propter*

influence of the blessed Spirit. For if the righteousness of Christ be so imputed to

" *merita Domini ac Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi*, &c. Ita " confessiones omnes a nobis paulo ante commemoratæ. " Neque aliud voluerunt confessiones (quæ paucissi- " mæ sunt) in quibus phrasis illa, *justitia Christi no-* " *bis imputatur*, κατὰ λέξιν reperitur. Audi Gallicanæ " Confessionis verba, Art. 18. ' Credimus totam justi- " tiam nostram positam esse in peccatorum nostrorum " remissione, quæ sit etiam, ut testatur David, unica " nostra felicitas. Itaque cæteras omnes rationes, qui- " bus homines existimant se coram Deo posse justificari, " plane repudiamus; omnique virtutum et meritorum " opinione abjecta, in sola Jesu Christi obedientia pror- " sus acquiescimus; quæ quidem nobis imputatur, tum " ut tegantur omnia nostra peccata, tum etiam ut gra- " tiam coram Deo nanciscamur.' Ubi eatenus tantum " justitiam Christi nobis imputari dicunt, ut propter " ipsam nos peccatorum remissionem consequamur, " Deoque ad salutem grati et accepti habeamur.....Sed " palam est, te locutione illa, qua Christi justitiam no- " bis imputari dicis, longe aliud voluisse. Quippe sta- " tuis, justitiam Christi ita nobis imputari, ut revera " nostra fiat, nosque ipsam in Christo præstitisse a Deo " censeamur; unde fit, ut ex illa justitia ipsi perfecte " justi, hoc est, ab omni peccati non modo pœna sed et " culpa, immunes proprie denominari possimus." He then proceeds to show, in the most convincing manner, the many ill consequences that necessarily follow from this doctrine, and how inconsistent it is with some of the plainest and most important positions of Christian truth. I shall only add a short but forcible sentence, quoted by Dr. Grabe, from a writer whom he frequently

us; if his perfect and unsinning obedience be so made ours, as to enable us to stand before the tribunal of God, clothed in the panoply of his perfection, then is it difficult to conceive what need there could have been for any sacrifice at all. His obedience was perfect, and certainly required no atonement for any defect, much less for any transgression; and if that obedience be completely ours, then we are as little in need of any propitiation to reconcile us to the Almighty. And again, with regard to the sanctification of the Spirit: how can he, who is already perfect, receive any addition, much less any correction, even from the Holy One himself? The idea of perfection certainly excludes both the one and the other. But the righteousness described and required of us in Scripture admits of both, and we are commanded to labour for both; and therefore we may fairly con-

commends, Gul. Forbes; *in considerationibus pacificis et modestis de Justificatione.* "Per Christi justitiam nobis "sic imputatam verissima Dei æstimatione æque justi "censemur et sumus quam ipse Christus; quod Chri- "stianæ aures vix ferre possunt."

clude, that as it is not absolutely perfect, it is not the righteousness of the immaculate Jesus imputed to us, but a righteousness, such as we are capable of, wrought in us by the good Spirit of grace, improved by our own earnest endeavours to cooperate with his holy inspirations, but accepted, because still defective, through the sole merits and intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

SERMON VI.

EPHES. iv. 8—12.

When he ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men..... For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

THE Moral Tendency of Divine Revelation having been proved from the holiness which it represents as essential to God, from the original perfection of man, from the loss of happiness through sin, and from the necessity of his restoration to righteousness before he can be restored to happiness, it remains to be seen, whether it has provided any means for attaining the object, upon which it appears so largely to insist. And that it has done so in the most ample manner will be evident from an inspection of the particular instances,

in which its care in this respect is conspicuous.

The means provided by Revelation for the moral improvement of man, may be considered as fairly arranging themselves under the following heads: religious and moral instruction in words; external emblematic signs, which, if understood at all, must be understood as shadowing out and requiring internal purity; direct moral discipline; and, above all, the sanctifying influences of God's Holy Spirit. All these are expressly supplied by the Revelation which we receive as Divine; and whatever their success or failure may be in eradicating vice or producing virtue, the Revelation, which provides them, must be acknowledged to have for its design the complete destruction of the former, and the effectual support of the latter.

With regard then to the first mean of moral improvement, we have this character of it given us by St. Paul, to enable us to judge of its intent and efficacy: "All "Scripture," says he, "is given by inspi- "ration of God, and is profitable for doc-

" trine, for reproof, for correction, for in-
" struction in righteousness: that the man
" of God may be perfect, thoroughly fur-
" nished unto all good works[a]." And that this character is to be extended to the Old Testament as well as the New, is clear from this, that the Apostle commands Timothy to " continue" in those " things" which he had " learned," not only from himself, as his evangelical instructor, but in those also which he had imbibed from the holy Scriptures, in which he had been conversant from his childhood[b]. But the only Scriptures in which Timothy could have been conversant from his childhood, were the Scriptures of the Old Testament, no other writings being then extant under that character; and consequently it was for his early proficiency in them, that he was commended by St. Paul. To them therefore must belong that property of useful instruction, which all Scripture is here declared to possess, and of them it must be confessed, that they have the power of " correcting" what is wrong, and enforc-

[a] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. [b] 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

ing what is right. And not only to the Law as delivered by Moses, and the authoritative instructions of the Prophets, who succeeded him, must this character be extended, but to all those previous intimations of God's Will, by which, though not written at the time, the Almighty was pleased to instruct the earlier inhabitants of the world in their duty to Himself. These, when recorded by the inspired penmen, become parts of that Scripture, which is described as so profitable for the improvement of man, and must be considered as equally the objects of the Apostle's recommendation as the Law or the Prophets precisely so called. Thus all the injunctions of God to Adam, all the denunciations against antediluvian wickedness, and all the encouragements to antediluvian virtue, all the promises and precepts delivered to Noah, and the covenant into which the Almighty graciously entered with this his chosen servant, must be received as so many Divine lessons, prepared for our use, and designed for our improvement, by the express appointment of our Maker. Every

command and every example, whether before the Law or under the Law, must be viewed in the same light; and forming, with what followed in the yet clearer enunciations of the Gospel, one consistent and complete system of heavenly wisdom for the benefit of man. And what a treasure of wisdom it is, when viewed in this its own comprehensive light, will be confessed by every one who has studied it with attention; and it will be confessed also, that it is a powerful instrument of making men at once wiser and better. He, who has read the holy Scripture with due care, may even now be truly said to have been "taught of God[c]," to have been instructed in his duty, religious and moral, by Him, whose Law is the rule of rectitude, and who best knows, both what it is fitting for us to do, and what is our ability to do it. I make use of the expression, religious and moral duty, because it is one which has generally obtained; though it does not seem either quite correct in itself, or altogether unproductive of ill effects[d]. For

[c] Isa. liv. 13. [d] Conybeare's Defence, p. 59, &c.

undoubtedly the first and highest moral obligation to man is that by which he is bound to serve and obey his Maker; this is his most important moral relation, the source and foundation indeed of all the other relations by which he finds himself bound. Whatever may be supposed as the basis of moral duty, by those who would attempt to form a system of ethics independent of Religion; however it may be founded upon the fitness of things, and their relation to each other; still the relation of man to that Almighty God, from whom his being was derived, must precede every other in time and in dignity, and it must ever be most fit, that to Him the first duty should be paid. The distinction therefore which has been admitted in terms between Religion and Morality, does not rest upon this, that the nature of man's obligation to observe the one is different from his obligation to observe the other; both rest upon the same eternal basis of immutable truth. But the distinction has obtained on account of the difference of objects to which the duty is referred by this difference of

expression, religious duty having God for its object, and moral duty being confined to the performance of what we owe to our fellow-creatures and ourselves. And this difference of expression has arisen, I conceive, from adopting, somewhat more than Christians ought to have done, the ideas and the language of heathen moralists. With them, unhappily, religion and morals had little to do with each other. Ignorant as they were of the true origin of things, ignorant as they were of the unity and spirituality of the Godhead, and of that Omniscient superintendence which He constantly exercises over the affairs and actions of men, they could not found their morals on their religion; and therefore it was excusable in them to consider these two sets of duties as no less distinct in the source of their obligation, than in the objects to whom they were addressed. But in those, to whom the oracles of Divine truth have been communicated, it is not so becoming to make this separation even in appearance. To them the best source of sound morals is pure religion; and though,

for the sake of a more clear consideration of each part of so important a subject, it may be allowable to introduce such distinctions, yet it should never be forgotten by any one, who knows the origin of man, and whence he derived his being, that religion is no less deeply bound upon him by the very constitution of his nature, than the duties which are more commonly called moral. The true distinction of human duty, and under which it can be most conveniently and properly discussed, is that which the Apostle has authoritatively laid down as the complete rule of human life. Godliness, righteousness, and sobriety, comprise the sum and substance of what man is required to do in order to please God, to satisfy his fellow-creatures, and in the best possible manner to secure his own health of body and peace of mind. But when the Apostle thus enumerates the parts of our duty, he does not intimate any difference as to the source or degree of our obligation to perform them. He rests the whole, as his Divine Master did before him, upon the declared Will of God, that

Will demanding at once, and with equal strictness, piety, justice, and temperance. And this surely is the only true source, the only certain foundation, of all human duty and all moral obligation. God, who made man, knew best what he was made for; and therefore whatever his Creator imposed upon him as duty, that, we may be satisfied, he as a creature was best fitted to perform. This seems sufficiently evident: but did it want confirmation, it would be found abundantly in an examination of that Divine Word, in which the Will of God has been announced. That Word is throughout clear and precise in delineating and enforcing the duty of man. The representation which it makes of the state of man after the fall is such indeed as to show, that the unhappy effects of the corruption introduced by sin spread rapidly and widely over the world; but it is such also as to indicate plainly, that they, who thus opposed the Will of God, and transgressed his precepts, knew, or might have known, the impropriety of their conduct. God had not left them "without a wit-

"ness[e]" to testify what conduct He required at their hands. When Cain slew his brother, he knew well that he was transgressing the law of God. When Lamech dared to give an example of polygamy, he could not be ignorant that "from the be-"ginning it was not so[f]." When it is said, that "Enoch walked with God," we are assured by the Apostle, that he was acquainted with both the faith and practice which were necessary to please his heavenly Father. Thus also, as we descend in the history of mankind, we find many holy men in the line of Seth; and the blameless integrity of Noah is conspicuously displayed. He was a preacher of righteousness, and it is most probable that there were others before him: but certainly he, who had been a preacher of righteousness before the flood, would not fail, after so signal an instance of the Divine vengeance on transgression, to enforce and inculcate the same righteousness, when he was the sole and absolute monarch of the world. If the descendants of Noah were not righteous, it

[e] Acts xix. 17. [f] Matth. xix. 8.

was not for want of knowledge, nor for want of Divine Revelation. Their father and their king was the commissioned herald of heaven; and they must have known, not only what they were required to do, and from what they were required to refrain, but the reward also which would be conferred upon obedience, and the punishment by which transgression would be visited. When we are told by St. Paul, that because Enoch pleased God he must have had faith, we are, I presume, entitled to conclude, that when Noah is called a preacher of righteousness, he was informed of the sanction, by which that righteousness would be best secured and enforced. It is, I think, impossible to conceive, that Noah was ignorant of the great leading doctrines, which teach man to consider this life as a passage to another. When we recollect, that God established his covenant with him, and that however limited that covenant might be, it must yet be understood to embrace that gracious promise which gave man the first hope of ultimately obtaining the victory over his enemy,

and which hope was now necessarily confined to his descendants, it seems in the highest degree probable, that some intimation, however obscure, of the redemption to be wrought in the fulness of time must have been communicated to this second father of the human race. And this it is necessary to observe, because, if this view of the subject be correct, it will account naturally and satisfactorily for all those remnants of religion and righteousness, with all those apparent anticipations of a more perfect revelation, which lie scattered in the compositions of those who lived under the Law, and through the whole mass of the heathen mythology. This will be a reason, why, though in the letter of the Mosaic dispensation the sanction of future rewards and punishments be not expressly provided, yet in that very Law there were clear intimations of a future and eternal existence. These intimations, as well as the rules of a more perfect morality, were antecedent to that Law, which, coming in as a temporary measure, was in itself grounded upon temporary views and principles.

Preceding generations had been supplied with information of a purer and more spiritual nature, but they had lost it through corruption. This must be granted: for even in the days of Abraham, and in the land of Canaan, where the manners of the inhabitants became afterwards so abominable, there was a regard had to the sacred rite of wedlock, over the history of which a Christian of the present day must blush with shame, and almost weep with sorrow. And this instance of regard for virtue was exhibited four hundred and thirty years prior to that awful promulgation of the Divine Will on Mount Sinai. Upon what then could it be founded, but upon that knowledge of right and wrong, which Noah was enabled to hand down in his instructions to his posterity. It was when this instruction began to fail and lose its effect, and there was a rapid degeneracy spreading over the face of the globe, that the Almighty again made a public declaration of his Will, and took measures to secure its more permanent establishment in the world. The Ten Commandments were delivered

with a solemnity calculated to inspire the whole human race with awe. In them, properly understood, were contained the principles of human duty in all its branches; but as those principles were expressed in few words, they became capable of expansion or contraction, according to the mind and disposition of him, who was called upon to observe them. Interpreted largely and liberally, they restrained every unworthy passion, and enjoined the best morals from the best motives; but considered merely in the letter, they would seem to respect only the outward actions of men, or to restrain those appetites alone, which lead to injustice and oppression. And accordingly we find, that many who lived under that Law contented themselves with a bare submission to its direct command, while others, of better and more enlarged minds, acknowledged the necessity of inward purity and rectitude of mind[g]. It must be confessed, indeed, that the Jewish Law permitted many things which were inconsistent, not only with the purer prin-

[g] Psalm xli. 10.

ciples afterwards promulgated in the Gospel, but with the earlier institutions of human society. Polygamy, concubinage, and divorce, were allowed to the Israelites, though our Saviour tells us plainly, that such allowance was contrary to God's Will, and Lamech appears to have been the first who transgressed the original institution of marriage. Still, though the Jewish Law was thus imperfect, in condescension to the hardness of their hearts to whom it was given, yet illustrated as it was, by the preaching of the Prophets, and by the ordinances which accompanied it, as well as by the previous instructions which had been imparted to the world, it served in an admirable manner to keep alive in men a due sense of religion, and a regard to moral equity and justice. We indeed, by the light of the Gospel, see its imperfection; but its value before that happy period, when "the glory of Israel and the light of the "Gentiles" appeared, we do not perhaps so justly appreciate. And yet the Law and the Prophets are by no means a dead letter to us, even as means of moral instruction.

Our Saviour took care, and it was necessary that he should take care, to inform his followers, that He came not to destroy either[h]: not to destroy, that is, to dissolve or diminish any moral obligation, which they could fairly be understood to impose, but to support their authority, by fulfilling in his own person their injunctions and predictions, as far as they concerned Himself, and laying his disciples under a strict charge to observe them, in that more liberal and enlarged sense in which He had expounded them. The word *fulfil* is certainly capable of a double meaning, either implying that our Saviour would Himself fulfil the Law by his obedience to all it required, or that He would, by his fuller instructions, supply its deficiencies. And the difficulty in assigning its precise signification, in the place we are examining, arises from the consideration, that in either sense the assertion is true. But there is this to

[h] Matth. v. 17. Grot. de Jure B. et P. lib. i. cap. ii. vi. 3. Hammond's Pract. Cat. p. 118, &c. Bull's Harm. Apost. p. 424. Collier's S. Interpret. vol. i. p. 231. and vol. ii. p. 32.

be observed in favour of the latter interpretation, that it accords better with what goes before. The former part of the assertion is, that Christ did not come to destroy or dissolve the Law or the Prophets: but if He so fulfilled them as to relieve his followers from any submission to their commands, though He did not destroy them as to himself, yet as to them, He certainly put an end to their authority. But that this was not his intention is clear from the strong terms, in which He afterwards reprobates the man, who should dare to inculcate any thing like a disregard to the Law, and from the pure and spiritual interpretation which He proceeds to give of all its moral precepts. Our Lord knew well, "for He knew what was in man[i]," how eagerly those, who were sensible of their guilt, would embrace his proffers of mercy, while many would yet be far from willing to forsake the sins by which that guilt had been contracted. He therefore took care to be explicit on this head; and while, according to his gracious office, He

[i] John ii. 25.

preached "liberty to the captives, and the "opening of the prison to them that were "bound[k]," He declared, in the plainest terms, that He loosened no tie of duty, and gave no licence to transgress the Law of God. So far from that, He told his disciples, at the very time that He was explaining to them the nature of his kingdom, that "unless their righteousness ex- "ceeded the righteousness of the Scribes "and Pharisees, into that kingdom they "could not enter[l]." But if the righteousness of the disciples was to exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, it was undoubtedly to do so by a better and purer observance of the Law. The Scribes and Pharisees, however blameable in their morals, were yet well acquainted with the holy Scriptures, and professed an implicit deference to their contents; they sat in Moses's seat, and were the authorized teachers of the people. They were therefore qualified in an eminent degree to expound the precepts of their Law; and though they erred in many of their inter-

[k] Isaiah lxi. 1. [l] Matth. v. 20.

pretations, yet in insisting upon the obligation to observe the Law itself, as a rule of duty, they were sufficiently rigid. On this account they had, amongst their countrymen, a high character of sanctity and integrity. This character indeed, when subjected to the deep scrutiny of our Saviour's Omniscience, could not stand the test; yet to those, who did not see its secret defects, it was a standard of exemplary obedience. When therefore our Lord told his disciples, that their "righteousness" must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, He gave them clearly to understand, that He was so far from letting them loose to the indulgence of any vicious propensity, as to require them to surpass in the practice of true virtue the exactest pattern which their country afforded. The Pharisees were, no doubt, in many ways deserving of censure for their hypocrisy and deceit; but the command of Christ was this, that even in that part of their character, in which they were really praiseworthy, and in that very righteousness for which they had more credit than they deserved, his

followers were bound to surpass them. If the Pharisees made a show only of observing the precepts of the holy Law they had received, the disciples of Jesus were to observe and obey them in sincerity and truth. And here it is impossible not to remark the difference between our Saviour's preaching, and that of some who would now be deemed the most zealous advocates of his Gospel. These latter tell their followers, that they must cast away the burden of their righteousness before they can effectually believe to salvation. Alas! it is a burden, which most of the sons of Adam may carry with ease. But whatever it be, our Divine Master no where requires his followers to part with any thing that is really good in themselves. He requires them to cast away their vices, but their virtues they may safely keep. It is so far from his wish in any degree to lessen or obscure these, that He delivers the most express orders, and the most useful directions, for their improvement. He confirms the authority of the Law, and both enlarges and purifies its interpretation. And in do-

ing so, as He gives the clearest proof of his desire, that all who profess his faith should be distinguished by the excellence of their moral conduct, so He takes from them every pretence for a vicious life on the plea of ignorance. Whatever obscurity might have clouded the earlier revelations of Divine truth, and however the Divine wisdom thought it right to condescend for a time to the failings of men, yet since the light of the Gospel has dispelled the shade of intellectual night, and the Son of God has declared, that the liberty, formerly allowed, can no longer be permitted, it must be acknowledged without reserve, that there can now be no doubt with respect either to the obligation or extent of duty. The precepts which enjoin it, and the instructions which describe it, when attentively examined by men of unprejudiced minds, are too authoritative for contradiction, and too plain for subterfuge. To worship God in sincerity and in truth, to do justice to our fellow-creatures, and treat them with the same kindness as we should think it reasonable to expect for our-

selves, and to keep our passions and affections in that due order which constitutes sobriety of conduct, these things are so palpably prominent, so conspicuously displayed in the Scriptures, that he who does not see them must be wilfully and obstinately blind. No man, who is able to read his Bible, can say, that his duty to God and man is not plainly and explicitly taught him. Nor is it only taught him: it is bound upon him by the most awful sanctions. His fears are awakened by the most alarming menaces, his hopes are excited by the most alluring promises of which his nature is capable. Throughout the whole of Revelation, the wrath of God is clearly denounced against sin, and his favour assigned as the reward of obedience: and though it may not always be so plain under the Mosaic dispensation, whether those threats and promises do in the letter reach to the rewards and punishments of a future life, or are to be confined to those of the present, yet, as it is evident that a knowledge of that future life was prior to the Law of Moses, and many under it enter-

tained better hopes than any which an earthly Canaan could afford; it is not possible to conceive, but that those threats and promises must have been all along understood as referring to a prospect far beyond the bounds of this terrestrial sphere. But however that be, to us every thing is plainly revealed. We are told, in terms which cannot be mistaken, and the force of which cannot be lessened by any difficulties arising from other considerations, that God has appointed [m] a day in which He will judge the world; that the persons to be judged are all the men and women who have ever lived from the creation of Adam, to that last hour when the trumpet of the Archangel shall call the dead from their graves [n]; and that what these persons shall be judged for is, the general tenor and particular circumstances of their conduct during their abode upon earth [o]. Our Saviour tells us, that this judgment will apply, not to actions alone, but to words [p] and thoughts also, and that according as

[m] Acts xvii. 31. [n] Rom. xiv. 10—12. [o] 2 Cor. v. 10. [p] Matth. xii. 33, 34—37. Heb. iv. 12.

each man's life shall appear upon this last examination, so will his final doom be fixed for ever. "The wicked shall go into ever-"lasting punishment, and the just into life "eternal;" this is the sentence which each sort of men, respectively, is to look for, on the word of Him who will judge them: and he, who will diminish the force of this unequivocal declaration, by any attempt at metaphysical subtlety, may, by the same subtlety, blot out of the Book of God every precept and every sanction it contains.

But not only do the clear precepts and explicit sanctions of Revelation promote the moral improvement of man; this principle is so interwoven in its design, that its very external institutions are all directed to the same important object[q]. Under the

[q] Spencer De Leg. Prolegomena. Conybeare's Def. p. 199. Butler's Analogy, p. 215, &c. Writers, who would set aside Revealed Religion as unnecessary, have sometimes indulged themselves in scoffing at its rites and ceremonies, as mere outward observances, of little value and little efficacy; with what small pretensions to truth or just reasoning, any man of impartial reflection may easily see. But it is more deplorable, to observe some of the friends of Revelation uniting with its enemies in an attempt to lower the character of its ordi-

Law and under the Gospel this direction is conspicuous.

The first institution of this kind under the Law was Circumcision. That this outward rite implied, and was intended to teach, the necessity of inward purity, seems clear from the allusion which was made to it by Moses himself. "Circumcise therefore," says he, "the foreskin of your heart, and "be no more stiffnecked[r]." Now, unless the Israelites had been previously informed, that circumcision had a moral tendency, unless they had been taught, that it implied and required an improvement of the mind, they could scarcely have comprehended what Moses meant by commanding them to "circumcise their heart." If the action was purely external, and the rite itself had no further signification, it would have been difficult for them to conceive in what sense their Leader used the

nances; and that they should not see, that to lower those ordinances, which derive all their value from Revelation, tends directly to the dishonour of that Revelation, and to the diminution of its credit and utility.

[r] Deut. x. 16.

expression; but supposing them to have already learned, that the outward ceremony was symbolical of an inward effect upon the soul, that the act, which purified the body, was intended also to represent and to enjoin the purity of the heart, they would have readily comprehended what Moses required, when he commanded the heart to be "circumcised." They would have referred to the mind what in the letter seemed to apply to the body alone; and from the external rite, would have learnt to cut off those impure and rebel passions, which so continually excited them to transgress the Law of God. But if this allusion seems not clear enough to warrant the moral import and bearing of this rite, another expression, in the same book, will put it beyond a doubt. It is there said, that "the "Lord their God would circumcise their "heart, and the heart of their seed [s]." But how, and for what purpose? By so purifying and correcting their minds, as to make them "love the Lord their God with all "their heart and with all their soul." This

[s] Deut. xxx. 6.

evidently was a spiritual effect, produced in a spiritual manner upon a spiritual subject. Why then was the act, by which this moral purification was effected, called the circumcision of the heart? Surely no better and no other reason can be assigned, than that the outward rite, to which this term was immediately applied, was understood to be of a symbolical nature; and therefore, though circumcision denoted in the letter an external act, yet as that external act was understood to imply a correspondent effect upon the mind, the latter was as properly called circumcision as the former. And this figurative language was so well understood, and appears so generally to have obtained, that it has happened in this instance, as in many others, that the metaphorical expression has sometimes set aside that which was more proper and peculiar. Thus when Moses pleaded his being unqualified, for want of eloquence, to deliver the children of Israel, he said, he was of "uncircumcised lips[t];" and thus also when Jeremy would call upon those

[t] Exod. vi. 12—30.

of a later day to cast off their sins by repentance, he tells them to "circumcise "themselves to the Lord[u]." In both these examples, though they differ in the precise object to which it is applied, yet the use of the term for something beyond its obvious meaning is evident. But it could not have thus passed into common use as a figurative expression, if it had not been previously and generally understood, that the rite from which it was derived had, and was intended to have, a moral signification and a moral efficacy, in correcting the passions and improving the affections of those for whom it was ordained.

The moral nature and tendency of the first initiatory rite under the Law being thus established, that of all those which follow will probably be admitted without dispute. The principle being recognized at the very commencement of the system, will readily be acknowledged to pervade and give a character to the whole. All the washings and all the purifications enjoined by the Law, must thus be under-

[u] Jerem. iv. 4.

stood as having a further and a better meaning than the mere cleansing of the body. The distinction of clean and unclean meats, though we cannot now assign the reason of each particular prohibition, and the exclusion from society of those who were afflicted with the loathsome disease of the leprosy, may on this principle be fairly considered as means of more effectually recommending mental purity. Thus also, when it is forbidden to wear "a garment "mingled of linen and woollen[x]," and to "plough with an ox and an ass together[y]," a clear intimation appears to be given of the value of simplicity, consistency, and order. But above all, the numerous sacrifices by which approach was to be made to the throne of the Almighty, and by which alone remission was to be obtained for their various transgressions, were calculated to impress them deeply with a sense of God's utter abhorrence of all iniquity. The great yearly expiation, by which the High Priest made an atonement for himself and for all the people, and even for the holy sanctu-

[x] Deut. xix. 19. [y] Deut. xxii. 10.

ary, must have excited in every well-disposed mind the most awful ideas of the Supreme Being. For how great must be the purity, how sacred the majesty, how ineffable the holiness of Him, before whom things the most venerable amongst men could not be accepted without an atonement?

But if the emblematical institutions of Religion, under the Law, thus tended to the moral improvement of those who observed them, their spiritual signification and efficacy is, under the Gospel, striking and conspicuous. The Gospel does indeed in a peculiar manner teach man to worship God "in spirit and in truth[z]." Its external ordinances are few and simple, but they are on that account worthy of the greater attention, and deserve the more profound regard. Strictly speaking, and considered separately from that public worship and profession which under some form or other is common to all religions, they are but two; though there is one more, of so high antiquity, and, when properly ad-

[z] John iv. 23.

ministered of such peculiar force and efficacy, that no man, who has any regard for primitive Christianity, can do less than give it a place among the best institutions of the best ages of the Church. Yet it will be considered perhaps with more propriety under the next head of our inquiry. But the two rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are of themselves sufficient to set in the strongest light the tendency of the Gospel to promote by its symbols the moral improvement of its professors. At present[a] we consider them only as rites, the observance of which tends directly to impress men with the importance and necessity of purity and virtue. The first represents, in a very lively manner, the inward purification of the mind. It is a rite indeed of great simplicity, requiring only the washing of water, either by sprinkling or immersion. But it is a washing: and it is ill understood, if it be not allowed to imply an answerable cleansing of the soul. He

[a] Having in another place endeavoured to shew the spiritual efficacy of Baptism, that view of the subject is here purposely omitted.

surely must have a mean opinion of the Christian Religion, who can think that the Author of that Religion, insisting as He did upon real substantial virtue, in contradiction to a mere formal compliance with external regulations, would establish any rite that was entirely void of spiritual application. The washing was external, in condescension to the infirmities of those for whose use it was intended; but the real value of the ceremony, as a part of Christian Religion, is felt in the truth, with which it represents the washing of the soul from the foulness of sin, and the lesson which it inculcates on the necessity of inward purity. St. Peter tells us plainly, that it is not the outward act, in which the essence of the rite consists. "It is not," says he, "the putting away the filth of the flesh, "but the answer of a good conscience that "saves us[b];" that answer, by which, when the candidate for Baptism was brought to the font, he renounced his sins, and made a solemn promise of future obedience. It was then of the essence of this rite, and

[b] 1 Peter iii. 21.

what gave a saving force and effect to its application, that he who received it should enter into a firm engagement to "cease to "do evil, and learn to do well[c]." Having been initiated into the Christian Religion by this ceremony, he was considered as "a "new creature[d]." He had put off "the "old man," whose character was that of a slave to "deceitful lusts," and by putting on the "new man" had devoted himself to that "righteousness and holiness," by which the new creature of the Gospel was to be distinguished. It is impossible therefore not to see and allow, that this rite of our Religion has an immediate tendency to promote the moral improvement of man.

In the other holy symbol of our faith this tendency will be yet more evident, as its direct design is to make the man in Christ perfect, and unite him to his Saviour by a holy bond of peace and charity. For what is it? what is its form, and what is its object? It is a commemoration of the death of Christ; that death, by which He made

[c] Isaiah i. 16, 17.

[d] 2 Cor. v. 17. Galat. vi. 15. Rom. vi. throughout.

atonement for sin, and suffered in his own person the penalty which sin had incurred. And is it possible to conceive any thing better calculated to excite an abhorrence of that sin, in every mind that has the least particle of generosity, than to contemplate an affecting representation of those sufferings, of which sin alone was the source and the cause? If, when we approach the sacred table, on which bread is to be broken and wine poured out, we ask why this is done? the answer is, that it is in remembrance of the Son of God, whose body was torn upon the cross, and his blood spilled upon the ground. If we inquire further, why and how it could be necessary that the Son of God should be subjected to so much ignominy and suffering? the answer must again be, that the sins of men had so far offended their righteous and Almighty Creator, that nothing less than the blood of his own Son, nothing less than the sacrifice of his precious life, could make satisfaction to the Divine Justice for the transgression of the Divine Law. And can there be a man, with any thing of the feelings of

a man, whose conscience will not be awakened by such a representation as this? If there be in him any moral sense at all, any capacity of distinguishing between right and wrong, and of judging correctly what is the duty and what the happiness of a being constituted as he finds himself to be, he cannot but be roused by such a scene to consider seriously his own condition. It was not possible, that the Almighty Himself could mark his detestation of sin more strongly than by the sacrifice of his Son. And can any man think himself at liberty to continue in that, against which Almighty God has thus awfully declared his anger? Is it to be supposed, that any one can be permitted to do that wilfully and obstinately, which excited the wrath of God "against his shepherd, and against "the man that was his fellow[e]?" We are not now considering the effect of Christ's death in the pardon procured for the sinner; that is a distinct question: but the proof, which it affords, of God's hatred to sin, and the lesson which it gives us of his

[e] Zach. xiii. 7.

determination not to suffer the transgression of his Law to go unpunished. And in this view the commemoration of that death must be allowed surely to teach that lesson most expressly. Even while the penitent sinner rejoices in the consolation, which the remembrance of Christ's sacrifice affords him, he cannot but be sensible that the sin, which caused that sacrifice, must be stamped with the hatred of God, in proportion to the costliness of the sacrifice itself.

But further: he, who is admitted to the table at which these sacred symbols are administered, is admitted to an union[f] with Christ and with God. And what ought to be the character of him who is admitted to this union? what should be his preparation for it, and what his deportment after it? He has surely but to consider the holy nature of that union, to be convinced, that before he can presume to hope for it, he must, to the best of his power, and by

[f] The reality of this union I now take for granted, having on another occasion endeavoured to prove it at large.

every means in his power, purify himself "from all filthiness of flesh and spirit[g]," and endeavour to attain all those pious, devout, and sanctified dispositions, which may best fit him to receive so great a benefit, and supply him with the "marriage "garment required by God in holy Scrip-"ture[h]." And when he has been admitted to so high an honour, when he has been made "one with Christ, and Christ "with him[i]," he can doubtless be at little loss to ascertain what conduct it becomes him to pursue. Being united with Christ, the Will of Christ should be his; and as that Will is clearly delivered in the inspired volume, which He enabled his faithful servants to compose and transmit to posterity, it must be his clear duty to conform to every precept it contains, to comply with all its injunctions, and to pay a willing and ready obedience to all its positive ordinances. But all those precepts, all those injunctions, and all those ordinances, either enforce the discharge of our moral duty in

[g] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [h] Exhort. to Comm. [i] Third Exhort.

direct terms, or are proposed as means and helps for its better performance; and therefore the rite, which so plainly binds us to observe them, must be acknowledged to have an immediate efficacy in furthering the moral improvement of all who are permitted to partake of it.

We come now in the third place to consider the moral discipline which Revelation has established in the world, and which may be clearly seen to pervade the whole system of Divine government, which Revelation has opened to our view. This system commenced when our first parents were expelled from Paradise, to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, and to be subjected to all the distress and calamity which sin had introduced; being necessary to check the progress of vice, and designed doubtless in a great degree to correct its ill effects. Natural evil is certainly not understood as it ought to be, unless it is considered both as the punishment and correction of moral depravity. Experience may teach us that it is so, and the Psalmist assures us that he found it so:

"Before I was afflicted," says he, "I went "astray, but now have I kept thy word[k]." The natural evil, which he suffered, had a happy effect in checking the moral evil, by which he had been led astray from truth and righteousness. And that it had this corrective tendency[l], not only in its effect, but in the design of God, he seems to acknowledge, when he says, that "it was "good for him to be afflicted;" it was a proof of the Divine goodness towards him, that he had been called by these means from his wanderings in the paths of vice. When therefore we are told in the records of Revelation, that in the earlier ages of the world Almighty God visited his creatures with severe marks of his displeasure, and ordained indeed throughout the uni-

[k] Psalm cxix. 67.

[l] The real nature and vast importance of this discipline will not be understood, unless it is traced to its origin in the condition of man, and the method, which God has been pleased to adopt in cherishing his virtues and eradicating his vices, during his state of probation on earth. Particular means and particular instances of discipline are founded upon this. See Butler's Anal. p. 132, 140.

verse, that wickedness should almost invariably be attended with its appropriate penalty of suffering, we should look upon the whole of this as intended by the great Creator and Governor of the world to correct, if it might be, the mischiefs which sin had introduced into his works. When they came from his Almighty hands, they were all pronounced good, naturally and morally good; but when they ceased to be good in the latter sense, sound discipline required that their natural goodness should cease also. It was necessary, that those who infringed the moral integrity of the creation, should be made to feel the wickedness and the folly of their conduct, by the consequences of pain and distress with which it was accompanied, and should be restrained in their career of vice, by seeing that the further they advanced in depravity, the further they would advance in misery. But though this discipline ought thus to be considered as pervading the whole system of nature, and though the instances of Divine vengeance upon sin, recorded in Scripture before the exodus of

the Israelites, are clear exemplifications of that system, yet at present our attention must be confined to that which was established under the Law, and which subsists, or ought to subsist, under the Gospel.

The nature of that discipline which was established under the Law, and to enforce which was the object of so many of its institutions, is thus set before us by Moses. "Thou shalt remember," says he, "all "the way which the Lord thy God led "thee these forty years in the wilderness, "to humble thee, and to prove thee..... "and He humbled thee and suffered thee "to hunger, and fed thee with manna, "which thou knewest not, neither did thy "fathers know; that He might make thee "know, that man doth not live by bread "only, but by every word that proceed-"eth out of the mouth of the Lord[m]." That there was a moral discipline here is obvious: the means of effecting it were affliction and suffering, relieved by the miraculous interposition of heaven: and the object was to teach them, first, a due sense

[m] Deut. viii. 2, 3.

of their dependence upon God's providence; and next, a due observance of his laws. It had been begun indeed, as we have seen, in much earlier times; those who were called to an especial share of God's favour being called also to undergo an especial share of that discipline which might best render them worthy of it. Abraham, the friend of the Almighty, was exercised with peculiar trials; and from the time of his being called to that high honour, led a wandering and unsettled life. The Patriarchs, his successors in the Divine blessing, were his successors also in the discipline to which he had been subjected. Moses himself, who was admitted to a nearer approach to the Almighty than any other of the sons of men, and who, as the type of the Messiah, occupies a peculiar place in the records of Scripture, was tried and exercised, both as a preparation for his high office, and during his continuance in it. And the principle, which was thus exemplified in his own life, and that of the Patriarchs his predecessors, was transferred into the body of his Law. The assignment

of natural evil as corrective of moral obliquity, could only be the immediate ordinance of Him who had the powers of nature at his disposal, and by Him alone could such a system be administered. But as He willed that some part of his power and authority should be exercised by those, whom He appointed to rule over his people, so he willed likewise, that in the punishment of vice and encouragement of virtue they should adopt some means correspondent to those, with which He Himself administered the affairs of the world. Civil and ecclesiastical government is clearly intended to supply to mankind, in some degree, by the substitution of human instruments, that necessary control of bad men, and protection of the good, which the Almighty does not think right to provide for by the immediate exertion of his own power. In both cases the governor is "the "minister of God for the punishment of "evil doers, and for the praise of them "that do well[n]." Even under that part of the Jewish economy, which has been

[n] 1 Peter ii. 14. Rom. xiii. 4, 5, 6.

most properly called a Theocracy, God did not govern without an authorized representative. There was always an ecclesiastical ruler in the person of the High Priest, who, in the absence of any civil appointment, possessed and exercised both branches of the supreme power. Generally, but at considerable intervals, the temporal branch was placed in the hands of a judge, appointed either for life or for the accomplishment of some particular purpose. But in whatever way the government was dispensed, certain it is, that a moral discipline was established; that there were laws promulgated for the regulation of manners, and powers conferred for the enforcing of obedience. And that these laws were of a moral nature is too apparent to be disputed. For though many of them to us now may seem to command or forbid what is of little importance, yet in the then state of the world it is easy to conceive, that there might have been very good reasons for their enactment. The great object at that time was to preserve among men a true sense of Religion, to

prevent them from running into idolatrous superstitions, and to keep them firm in the belief of One God, and of his superintending providence. We have already proved, that the first moral duty of man, as a created being, is to conform his actions to the Will of his Creator. When therefore all the world were madly giving themselves up to the basest superstitions, and in a blind admiration of the meanest creatures forgetting the God that made them, it must have been the first object of a wise discipline to restrain those, who were placed under it, from following so corrupt an example, from being carried away by the overwhelming current of a wide-wasting flood of corruption. This, if well considered, would, I presume, enable us to judge better of some parts of the Jewish dispensation. To preserve principles should be the prime object with him, who wishes to preserve sound morals; and as the being of God, with an acknowledgment of his attributes, is the very source and basis of integrity, it was in the highest degree necessary that this point should be secured

with the greatest care and attention. We should not therefore be surprised, if in some lesser instances the Divine goodness condescended to the infirmity of those over whom its superintendence was exercised; if, as our Saviour tells us, some things were permitted "for the hardness of their "hearts[o]," which to us, enlightened by the Gospel, appear inconsistent with good morals, and which the Author of that Gospel pronounced to be against the original constitution of human society. God was pleased to treat his creatures according to their weakness; not to exact of them that which was precisely best, but the best of which their circumstances would admit. While the main point of preserving the knowledge of God among men was secured, and they were restrained from paying that honour to heathen vanities which was due to Him alone, some indulgence was granted them in matters of practice. It is on this principle that some characters stand prominent in Scripture, who are yet by no means free from imputations on their mo-

[o] Mark x. 5.

rals. David himself was called the man after God's own heart; not that he was without faults, far from it; but because he had ever adhered steadily to that first principle of loyalty to the King of heaven, on which all morals and all religion are ultimately founded. And his example proves the value of this principle; a message from his God recalled him at once from the error of his ways. Others, his successors, who cast off all regard for true religion, sunk deeper and deeper into vice, till they were lost in irretrievable wickedness. Even his son Solomon, distinguished as he was by the Divine favour, was so far corrupted by his fall into idolatry, as to make it at this day a question whether he ever returned to a better mind. If therefore the laws of the Jewish polity, both in Church and State, and the sanctions by which they were supported, were framed with the view of preserving in the world a regard for the one true God, as the sole object of their worship and obedience, it must be acknowledged, that it was an object worthy of their care. It was the point about

which there was then the greatest danger of error; and it was that point, respecting which an error would be attended with the most fatal consequences. While this was preserved entire, other deviations might be corrected as circumstances would best allow; but if this was impaired or corrupted, the very source of religion was polluted, and nothing could be looked for but a hopeless degeneracy. But though the discipline established in the Jewish Church was thus directed mainly to the preservation of the first principles of religion, yet was it by no means confined to this one point. It provided carefully for the observance of many important particular duties. The Decalogue itself, even in its literal acceptation, secured effectually the main points of piety, of justice, and sobriety: and whoever will read with attention the instances[p], in which the Israelites were required to exert themselves actively for the benefit, and to abstain religiously from the injury, of their neighbours, will possibly see cause to blush at the deficiency of

[p] Exod. xxi. xxii. xxiii.

Christian practice, when compared with a rule, the defects of which Christians have undoubtedly the means of detecting.

The superior light of the Gospel will however have been bestowed upon men to little purpose, if its only effect should be to teach them to observe the defects of a preceding dispensation. If we have more and better light, we are required assuredly to live by a better and more accurate rule. And nothing can be clearer in point of fact, than that the discipline originally established and intended to be kept up in the Christian Church, was every way answerable to the improved rule of religion and morals with which it was supplied. The purity of the Gospel code has been acknowledged by those who had little regard for the Gospel itself; and the purity of its discipline was designed to preserve the due administration of the laws it had promulgated. Whatever may have been the disputes about it, and whatever may be in the present day the difficulty of exercising it[q], there is no point in the Gospel plainer

[q] This, I am aware, is tender ground, and I therefore

than this, that a discipline was established in that society, which is called the Church

tread it lightly. But no true lover of Christ's Church can do less than lament deeply and unfeignedly the palpable ill effects which have resulted from its want of discipline. Many causes have been assigned for the divisions and distractions in which we are involved; but speaking from observation as a Parish-Priest, I should say, that to no *one* are they so much owing, as to a relaxation of the bonds which unite men in ecclesiastical society. Our people, being at liberty to leave the Church or frequent it, at their own discretion or caprice, do not feel any tie of communion sufficiently strong between themselves and their pastors; by leaving us they seem to lose nothing, as they can resume their station at their own pleasure. It may be said, that the evil is irremediable. Perhaps it is, but it need not be made worse. At all events, those who have any power to prevent its increase, would do well to consider the following passage in Eusebius, on an occasion of a similar nature. Νόμον ἐκπέμπει (Licinius) διακελευόμενον, μηδαμῆ μηδαμῶς ἀλλήλοις ἐπικοινωνεῖν τοὺς ἐπισκόπους, μὴ δ' ἐπιδημεῖν αὐτῶν ἐξεῖναί τινι τῇ τοῦ πέλας ἐκκλησίᾳ· μηδέ γε συνόδους ἢ βουλὰς καὶ διασκέψεις περὶ τῶν λυσιτελῶν ποιεῖσθαι· τὸ δ' ἦν ἄρα πρόφασις τῆς καθ' ἡμῶν ἐπηρείας· ἢ γὰρ παραβαίνοντας τὸν νόμον ἐχρῆν ὑποβάλλεσθαι τιμωρίᾳ· ἢ πειθαρχοῦντας τῷ παραγγέλματι, παραλύειν ἐκκλησίας θεσμούς· ἄλλως γὰρ οὐ δυνατὸν τὰ μεγάλα τῶν σκεμμάτων ἢ διὰ συνόδων κατορθώσασθαι. De Vita Const. lib. i. cap. 51. It does indeed frequently happen, that the wickedness of the world leaves conscientious men but a choice of difficulties in the discharge of their duty; yet the difficulty of a duty can never be admitted as an excuse for its neglect; other-

of Christ. That society was never intended to consist of a number of scattered members, professing indeed a certain common set of opinions, but united by no external bond, and subject to no common government. It was in every respect a society regularly constituted, having a regu-

wise the primitive Christians were little to be admired for the firmness with which they endured sufferings, rather than renounce their faith, or defile the purity of the Gospel. Discretion is, no doubt, an excellent thing, and forbearance is a necessary duty; but the soundest discretion, and the most enduring forbearance, cannot require nor admit any sacrifice of principle. If however neither past error can be retrieved, nor the progress of a debilitating system be prevented, the matter must be referred to Him who knows what is best, and will in his own good time provide it. In the mean time it will become the friends of truth to arm themselves with that faith and patience which will be their best support, should the Almighty, according to the idea of an ancient Father, excite against his own servants the violence of their adversaries, "ut devotionem ac fidem "suorum vel probet vel corroboret, donec pressuræ ver- "beribus *diffluentem corrigat disciplinam.*" See Dr. Marshall's Penitential Discipline, and Cave's Primitive Christianity. Those, who have not the means of procuring, or the leisure for perusing, works of larger and deeper research, will find a correct and impressive view of the discipline of better times in the excellent Nelson's Treatise on the *Fasts* of the Church of England.

lar external form, by which members were to be admitted; binding them, when admitted, to the performance of certain external duties, and placing the whole under the control and management of those, to whom the charge was committed in a given way by the Founder of the society Himself. If this be not clear, there is nothing clear in the Bible. The promises of the Gospel are all made to members of a society, and not to men in their individual capacity. Into this society those alone are to be admitted, who are willing to make certain stipulations, and to profess certain tenets; and those are to be excluded, who either refuse at first to make such stipulations, or depart from the stipulations they have made. Our Saviour's directions on this head are plain and precise. One great object of his endeavours, for the reformation of mankind, was to unite them together in mutual love and good will; and in order the better to attain this object, he commanded, that if any disagreement should arise between the members of his society, which they could not settle in a

private manner, they should apply to the Church for a final determination[r]. But unless the Church was a visible society, they could not have known where to apply, and unless it had authority to decide upon the questions brought before it, they would have applied in vain. The application however was not intended to be in vain; for he, whose authority cannot be disputed, said expressly, that the party which would not be concluded by the authority of the Church, should be excluded from its pale, and no longer suffered to enjoy its privileges. The authority, thus directed to be exercised in a particular instance, we know, was exercised in others. St. Paul possessed and exerted the power of arranging the order of public worship in the Church of Corinth; and by the same power he commanded that the incestuous person should be excommunicated for his crime, and readmitted on his repentance[s]. And this exercise of authority pervaded the whole system of Christian communion. The members of the Church were subject to the su-

[r] Matth. xviii. 15—20. [s] 1 Cor. v—x. xi.

perintendence and inspection of the Governors of the Church: their duties were enjoined them, and they were required to perform them, not only as accountable to God at the last day, but as liable also to the censure of those who were appointed to "watch over their souls[t]," and to see that the care of those souls was not neglected. The great Apostle of the Gentiles is very precise in his orders to this effect, not only directing his people what they should do themselves, but with whom they should be on terms of intimacy: he writes to them, and he writes to them as one who expected to be obeyed, that they should not "company with fornicators, drunk-"ards, railers, or extortioners." Nor was it intended, that the authority thus plainly exercised by this great Apostle should be considered as residing in him personally, or terminating on his removal. His directions to Timothy and Titus are decisive proofs to the contrary. But particularly at his affecting interview with the Elders of Ephesus, he himself declares, that this

[t] Heb. xiii. 17.

power and its due exercise were necessary to the preservation of the Christian community in faith and virtue. "Take heed," says he, "to yourselves, and to all the "flock over which the Holy Ghost hath "made you overseers, to feed the Church "of God..... For I know this, that after "my departing shall grievous wolves come "among you;.... also of your own selves "shall men arise, speaking perverse things, "to draw away disciples after them. There-"fore watch[u]." They were required then by this charge, which St. Paul left as his last legacy among them, to take care of, and to keep a vigilant eye over, all the members of that part of the Church which was entrusted to their hands: they were to feed them as shepherds do their flocks, guarding them from the attacks of wolves, and keeping them within those inclosures, in which they would be most secure; they were to watch continually, according to the pattern the Apostle himself had set them, and they were to leave no means unemployed to prevent their people from falling

[u] Acts xx. 28—31.

into any corruptions in practice, or any perversions of the faith. All this surely implies, as much care, so a competent authority to make that care effectual; and the whole was clearly designed to render those, who embraced the doctrine of the Gospel, as eminent for the purity of their morals as for the soundness of their religious principles, and the accuracy of their religious knowledge.

There remains yet to be considered, the best and most powerful mean of correcting the aberrations of our hearts, and restraining the violence of our passions; but it is happily as plain as it is important, and has indeed unavoidably entered into the whole of our previous inquiry. In the last passage of Scripture, which has been the subject of our reflections, we are told, that "overseers were set over the Christian "Church by the Holy Ghost;" implying evidently, as indeed is clear from other places, that the Church was in some peculiar manner put under the personal superintendence of the Spirit of God. Our Lord said explicitly, that when He left the world,

the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter or Advocate of his people, should supply his place[x]. The ways and degrees in which it has pleased Him to exercise this his gracious office, are represented as various. One, we have seen, was the appointment of proper persons to take the external management of the society. Another very eminent exertion of his power was the mental illumination, by which the first preachers of the Gospel were enabled, in a miraculous manner, to understand and to communicate the great mysteries of faith, and that "demonstration of the Spirit[y]," by which their authority was supernaturally attested and supported. Each of these directly tended to the improvement of mankind. But that holy Being, who first gave life to the world, has condescended to labour still more immediately for the restoration of his rational creatures; and by shedding his gracious influence on their hearts, to support their infirmities, to keep

[x] John xvi. 7—15. See Archbishop Sharpe's Three admirable Discourses on the Advocation of the Spirit.

[y] 1 Cor. ii. 4.

them back from sin, and to incite them to virtue. That such an operation is ascribed to the Spirit of God in the Gospel, is as clear as words can make it. We have seen that even under the Law it was more than intimated, and was, no doubt, frequently obtained. The circumcision of the heart could be effected by Him alone, to whose eye the heart was open, and whose influence could penetrate its deepest recesses. But the Gospel is emphatically, in its promulgation and its effects, the work of the Spirit of God. It is our Lord's unqualified declaration, that to all, who would ask[z], his Father would grant this most precious gift of his grace. St. Paul tells us, that Christians "live by the Spirit[a]," and that because they do so, they should also "walk "by the Spirit:" and still more unequivocally, if possible, that the fruits of the Spirit are all the virtues by which the human mind can be adorned, or human society made happy. They alone are the "sons "of God," who are "led by the Spirit of "God[b]." Led by him: how? By that

[z] Luke xi. 13. [a] Gal. ii. 20. and v. 25. [b] Rom. viii. 14.

powerful, but silent influence, by which He effectually works upon their souls, and enables them to "perfect holiness in the "fear" and the love of God.

The means then which Revelation has supplied for the attainment of moral integrity are ample, and in addition to the other points we have considered, may be allowed perhaps to prove, in the most satisfactory manner, that the direct tendency of that Revelation is to make mankind better, to encourage virtue, and to suppress vice, and that in fact all its provisions and all its institutions are plainly designed to advance and secure this great object. When we are told expressly, as in the text we are told, that our blessed Saviour "gave gifts "unto men," not to make them easy in their sins, or to puff them up with a vain conceit, or to amuse them with false hopes; but "for the edifying of the body of Christ," and that all the members of that body, "speaking the truth in love, might grow "up unto Him in all things" that are "ho- "nest, just, and pure[c]," it certainly can-

[c] Philip. iv. 8.

not be consistent with that truth, or agreeable to the intentions of its Author, that it should ever be made a cloak to hide the deformity of sin, or to speak peace to those, of whom God himself has emphatically assured us, that, while they continue "wicked," they can have "no peace[d]" and no hope.

[d] Isaiah lvii. 21.

SERMON VII.

HEB. xi. 1.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

CLEARLY as we may seem to have proved, from a view of the leading features of Revelation, that its tendency is to improve the moral condition of mankind, there are however some doctrines of the Gospel, which, as they have been occasionally taught and represented, would appear to be not altogether consistent with the position we have been endeavouring to establish. I propose, in the two remaining Discourses, to consider the two most prominent of these, and to examine whether, as they are laid down in the Scripture itself, they do in any degree diminish the obligation or lessen the importance of mo-

ral duty. The first is the doctrine of salvation by Faith alone; the second, that of Election to eternal life; points these of the last importance certainly, but which, I have persuaded myself, are so far from having an unfavourable aspect upon sound morals, that they are the surest principles upon which a firm superstructure of sound morals can be raised.

Let us consider then, in the first place, the important doctrine of salvation by Faith.

It ought undoubtedly to be confessed at once, and confessed with the utmost humility and gratitude, that the only hope, which the sons and daughters of Adam can have of salvation, is founded on the sole merits of Jesus Christ. And this being acknowledged as the basis of our reasoning on this subject will show us plainly, how faith becomes that qualification of the mind to which the business of salvation is mainly attributed. It might indeed be remarked, and the remark would appear to be of weight, if followed up to its due consequences, that to be "justified by faith,"

and to be ultimately "saved by faith," are not expressions of precisely the same meaning. In general "justification" in Scripture stands for that acceptance of a guilty person before God, by which on the remission of his sins he is accounted as righteous, as if in fact those sins had never been committed, and as if the person himself had invariably obeyed the Law of God. But this remission is constantly represented to have taken place at the first profession of the Christian faith by a convert, and on his first admission into the Christian Church by Baptism[a]: and consequently the justification, which is equivalent to, or coincident with, this remission, must appear to have been granted at the same time. This is the light in which it is viewed in the Articles and Homilies of our Church, which speak of works following justification as being both acceptable to God and necessary to our final salvation[b]; and consequently justification itself is considered

[a] See Barrow on Justification.

[b] Art. XI. and XII. and Hom. on Salvation.

as something distinct from and antecedent to final salvation. But further: even the word "saved" itself does not always mean to be admitted to eternal happiness. As to be "justified" stands for being acquitted from previous guilt, so to be "saved" stands for being rescued from the present power and influence of those sins, in which while men continue, they are considered sunk in hopeless perdition[c]. In both cases reference is made apparently more to the past condition of men, than to the certainty of their future prospects. The "justified" of Scripture are they whose past sins have been forgiven; the "saved" of Scripture are generally they, who having been rescued from the ruinous course of life they were pursuing, are placed in a better and a safer way, freed from their former errors, and delivered from their former dangers. What may be the ultimate result, may possibly rest upon other considerations, and mainly upon their conduct under the

[c] Vide Parkhurst in σώζω et σωζόμενοι. Cebetis Tabula, et Cicero de asotis, De Fin. ii. 7, 8.

more favourable circumstances in which they have been thus mercifully and graciously placed.

But to wave this, which yet seems entitled to great attention, and taking salvation by faith alone in the sense of ultimate and final admission into heaven at the day of judgment, it will not be difficult to see how this should be, and to demonstrate its consistency with the undiminished force of moral obligation under the Gospel. The basis of human Salvation is the oblation of that Lamb, who was "slain from the foun-"dation of the world[d];" the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ in our nature to the offended justice of his Father, by which through the shedding of his most precious "blood He obtained eternal redemption "for us[e]." This is our protection against the punishment we have deserved, this is our assurance of regaining the happiness our first parents had forfeited[f]. But the

[d] Rev. xiii. 8. [e] Heb. ix. 12.

[f] Dr. Edwards's Preservative, second part; and Grotius de Satisfactione, so often recommended and quoted by him.

question will be, how we are to get an interest in the protection and assurance thus obtained for us by another person? It will be readily confessed, that this must depend upon the will of that person himself, and that it must rest with him to say, how and in what way and on what terms, if any, an interest may be acquired in the benefits he has procured. But one thing is certain, that the very first step towards the application of this benefit to us, as far as it depends on any act of ours, must be our believing it: for till we believe it, it cannot in truth with respect to us be said to have any existence. It would appear then in reason most probable, that if it were proposed to confer this benefit upon men on any conditions, the first of them would be, that they should give credit to the proposal itself. Till they did this, it would be impossible that it should have any effect, either on their understanding or their affections. The advantage to be obtained is not one of immediate possession, but to be hoped for hereafter; and the means, by which it is to be obtained, are such as

derive their efficacy from the character and authority of Him who supplies them; and His character and authority are to be admitted upon such evidence as they are capable of. The Gospel then, when it proposes to us the attainment of eternal happiness as the free gift of God in Christ, does very naturally require that we should in the first place believe what it asserts, and faith becomes almost of course the first principle by which we take an interest in its contents. It is indeed, and must be, the first principle by which we take any interest in religion at all. Religion comprehends the homage and the duty which we owe to an invisible God, and the blessings and benefits which we hope for from Him. When therefore we "believe that "He is, and that He is a rewarder of them "that seek him[g]," this is purely an act of faith, and such an act as is most properly represented by the Apostle to be the very foundation of all religious feeling and service. He defines it with great accuracy in the text, and then tells us, that it is by

[g] Heb. xi. 6.

this faith "we understand the worlds were "framed by the word of God." For it "is "the evidence of things not seen." Faith and sight are in Scripture strongly contrasted [h]. What our sight informs us of, we know by our own experience; what we receive by faith, we believe upon the testimony of another. Religion establishes an intercourse between man and his Maker, between a being enveloped in flesh and blood, and a pure Spirit, of whose mode of existence he cannot form the remotest conception. And what can be a more necessary basis of such an intercourse than that man should be prepared, not only to believe that the Being, whom he cannot see, exists, but to admit also the truth of every declaration He may make, and the propriety of every order He may give? Unless this basis be laid, the intercourse between them cannot proceed a step further; unless man rests with implicit confidence on the veracity of his Creator, he can have no communion with Him whatever. No threatening would excite terror,

[h] 2 Cor. v. 7.

no promise would inspire hope, no precept would secure obedience, unless faith was established as the basis of an undoubting reliance on the word of God. Want of faith must at once separate the creature from the Creator, because it is the want of that without which there can be no connecting link between them. Atheism is the destruction of Religion, because it is the destruction of that faith upon which Religion is built. "No man hath seen God at "any time[i];" and if he believes his existence, he must believe it upon such evidence as, however ample and sufficient in itself, is yet to be embraced by faith. The folly of those, who will believe nothing but what they have themselves seen, is indeed clear enough; for their sentiments are at variance with the very nature and constitution of man, who is obliged to act perpetually in all the affairs of life upon what he believes to be true, though he has never had any sensible experience of it: but this folly is inconsistent with the very being of religion. Here a man must act upon the

[i] John i. 18.

principle of faith, or he cannot act at all. It is according to the depth or shallowness with which this principle is fixed in the mind, that a man's character is religious or profane. If the being and attributes of God be embraced with so firm a belief as to be in a manner present to the soul; if a deep conviction be produced in the heart, not only that God is, but that He is wise, good, and powerful, and that He exerts that wisdom and goodness and power in regulating the affairs of men, in protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty, and in bestowing upon all many proofs of his benevolence and bounty; if a man be so impressed with a persuasion, that God rules in all the kingdoms of the earth, as to seek support in distress from a reliance on His providence, and to be restrained in prosperity by a fear of His displeasure, that man feels within himself, and manifests to others by his conduct, that he is under the influence of a principle, which as it places God always before him, so it binds him to consider the will of God in all his designs and actions. But if by a more en-

larged information and a better understanding, both of God's government and of his own destination, he looks beyond the present life, and perceives, that though his body must be consigned to corruption, yet that his soul survives, and that both shall, at some future time, partake of eternal happiness or misery, according as their conduct has been in this period of their existence, it cannot be but that the belief of so concerning a truth must have a correspondent effect upon his sentiments and practice. It is nearly self-evident, that where such a belief is sincere, and taken up upon consideration, and brought frequently before the mind by meditation, it must have a practical efficacy. The only thing that throws a doubt upon it is this, that as professed atheists have ever been few in number, so those who profess a belief in religion have always been a large majority of mankind. If then it were true, that faith is so powerful a principle of good conduct, it might have been expected, that since the greater part of men have ever professed some religious principles, the moral

state of the world would have been better in all ages than impartial history has been able to represent it. The complaint is an old one, and whether new or old, it were devoutly to be wished that it could be proved to be false. But it must be granted, that through all the several forms of religion which have obtained among men, the conduct of their followers has generally been a discredit to the principles they professed. Even the mythology of heathenism, gross as it was, taught some lessons of integrity which its disciples failed to practise[k]; and, as far as it was corrupt, it owed that corruption to the degeneracy of those through whose hands it passed. But what does this prove? that faith is an inefficient principle of conduct? No: but that faith, like every other principle, can only act in proportion as its influence is admitted. If it be admitted in its own genuine strength and force, its effects will be proportionably powerful and permanent; but if it be admitted partially and with reserve, its influence will be partial, weak,

[k] De Fin. lib. iv. 5.

and fluctuating. The inequality then, which has been observed, and which cannot be denied, though it must be deeply lamented, between the professions and the practice of those who call themselves friends of religion, does not in any degree prove the inefficacy of faith as a principle of good morals; but it proves, that men admit the principle of religious belief into their minds partially, and with reserve. It might be supposed indeed, and they who have wished to found an argument against religion on the misconduct of its followers, have generally chosen to suppose it, that when men profess any particular system of religion, they embrace entirely all the principles it contains; but every man, who knows any thing of human nature, knows that the very reverse is the case. The different degrees and different manners, in which the truths of religion are admitted into the mind, are varied beyond calculation, according to the different tempers and complexions of men. Faith in too many instances is made to take its hue from the soul which receives it, instead of giving to

that soul its own colour. With many, even among ourselves, in the sunshine of Gospel light, the belief of that Gospel amounts to no more than this, that they do not disbelieve it: as to having any one of its truths firmly fixed in the mind, upon a due consideration of its weight and importance, that is a degree of regard, which they have not yet paid to a religion, on which they would appear to place all their hopes. But what effect can be expected from such a reception of religion as this? Not to disbelieve a truth, and to believe it, are surely two very different things; and though it should be granted, that the former possessed little power to influence the heart and affections, it would not follow that the latter was equally inefficient. In such instances it has in fact not been tried; of positive faith there has in truth been none; and consequently whatever may be the inconsistency between their conduct and the religion they profess, that inconsistency must be charged upon the hardness of their hearts, in which faith in fairness cannot be said to have entered at all. But even when

it has been admitted, it is often admitted partially. The mind of man has many secret recesses, many complicated folds, many turnings and windings, in all of which some errors have been harboured, and some corruptions have been cherished. Faith, if received into a mind wholly surrendered to its operation, will induce a willingness to correct all these errors, and to discard all these corruptions. But experience tells us, that it is often otherwise. It must not advance beyond certain limits. So far it shall come, and no farther. It shall be allowed perhaps to inspire one with a bigotted zeal for some one truth, or what he conceives to be truth; it shall restrain in another some one corrupt propensity, which is not indeed the ruling passion of his soul; and it shall excite a third to some exertion (the least disagreeable to the bent of his mind) in favour of his own peculiar notions: but it shall not rule without control in all the secret recesses of the heart; it shall not explore its windings, or expose the deceitful complication of its folds. And because it is not allowed to do its office with effect,

must the fault be charged upon its want of power and efficacy? In such a charge there would be as little reason as justice. It is not the principle that is weak, but a corrupt heart, that will not submit to its operation.

But there is another source of the apparent inefficiency of faith, and one, which, as it applies peculiarly to the faith of the Gospel, it well becomes us to examine with attention. It has been generally admitted, that a true faith in the Gospel will necessarily produce integrity of life, as necessarily as "a good tree" produces "good "fruit[1];" and it must be acknowledged, that this is the clear doctrine of our Articles and Homilies. If this be true, it is another pregnant proof, how directly Divine Revelation tends in all its parts to promote good morals. And when properly explained, nothing is more easily demonstrated than the truth of this proposition. A true faith will assuredly produce a good life. But what is a true faith? The very epithet "true" shows, that faith may be of differ-

[1] Matth. vii. 17.

ent kinds, and that what may be affirmed correctly of one kind, may not be properly applicable to another. Though then it be right to say, that a true faith will always show itself in its effects upon the moral conduct of man, yet it is possible for one who appears to have some kind of faith to continue in the practice of many things that are wrong. Nor can it be denied, that this doctrine, well founded as it is in itself, has been so represented as to produce the very worst effects. Because a true faith must be productive of sound morals, therefore it has been commonly taught, that faith, however qualified, will be attended with the same good effects. It has not been sufficiently considered, that a true faith cannot exist without a competent knowledge of the articles which it ought to embrace, nor yet without a competent acquaintance with the rule of life. If faith be understood to signify a hearty concurrence in all revealed truth, nothing is more certain, than that it will, where genuine, purify the affections and rectify the morals; but if it be put by itself for belief only, in-

dependent of knowledge, it ought cautiously to be observed, in what sense it is that faith is necessarily productive of a good life. An error on this point may be attended with the most lamentable consequences, and it is attended with such consequences every day. Ignorant men are told by men nearly as ignorant as themselves, that faith must necessarily bring forth the fruit of holy living; and when they have once persuaded themselves that they have this faith, they are satisfied that their lives must be good, because they are possessed of the faith from which a good life is said necessarily to spring. But, unhappily, they are not taught in what the real efficacy of faith, taken by itself, consists, nor yet the necessity of knowledge to direct the operations of their faith. Having faith, they are supposed to have every thing; whereas, in fact, they have not the materials upon which a true faith can be built. Their feelings are excited, but their ignorance is not removed. The method of proceeding ought to be quite the reverse; their ignorance should be removed,

before their feelings are addressed at all. Faith and knowledge have each its separate use and efficacy in the business of religion. They may indeed either be considered as united, or viewed distinctly in their several aptitudes and capacities. The ancient writers, and the Fathers of our own Church, always joined them together, intending invariably, when they speak of the power and efficacy of a true faith, such a faith as was duly grounded upon a knowledge, not only of the articles to be believed, but of the duties to be performed [m]. And with this correct view of the subject before them, they had ever a proper regard for the Law of God as the rule of life, and took pains that it should be duly opened and explained to the people. Hence their anxiety to provide sound elementary instruction both in faith and morals. And it is from a different and erroneous view, that those elementary instructions, which the pious care of our learned ancestors has bequeathed to us, have with many high

[m] Mede's Discourses, 25, and 26. Hammond's Practical Catechism. Bull's Harmon. Apost. Barrow's Sermons, and Patrick's Parable of the Pilgrim.

pretenders to faith in the present day fallen into discredit and disuse; that we see so many crude attempts to set aside that excellent compendium, which men of real attainments value in proportion to the attainments they possess. It is therefore possibly the best way, under existing circumstances, and to counteract the bearing of existing errors, to consider these two principles separately; and assigning each its own weight and importance, to discern precisely their respective influences on the question before us.

It is clear then, that in order of time a certain degree of knowledge must precede any degree of faith. Thus no man could be expected to believe the existence of God, unless he were first informed that God exists, nor to place any reliance on His attributes of power, or wisdom, or goodness, unless he had first learned that those attributes belonged to Him. Faith in the Gospel presupposes certainly a knowledge of the Gospel. Our Lord himself clearly and kindly admits this, in his reply to the blind man [n], whom He had restored

[n] John ix. 35, 36, 37.

to sight. When He had asked this man, whether he "believed on the Son of God," and had received an answer which implied his willingness to believe, but at the same time confessed his ignorance as to the object on whom his belief should be placed, He acknowledged the reasonableness of this excuse for not believing, by removing the ignorance which occasioned it. His not knowing the Son of God was a sufficient apology for his not believing on Him; it was then only belief became a duty, because then only it became possible, when he was informed who the Son of God was. But the knowledge, which is necessary before our belief can be that true faith which will produce a good life, must reach beyond the mere articles to be believed; it must bring us acquainted with the rule of duty, and teach us not the *credenda* alone, but the *agenda* likewise of our religion. For faith, however sincere, is not the rule of life; and before it can produce its adequate effect upon any man's morals, even when it has been honestly admitted into his mind, he must have been previously in-

structed, as well in what he is to practise, as in the opinions he should entertain. And here it is that the great error has been committed. Because faith united to knowledge has been confessed, and justly, an infallible source of pure morals, faith without knowledge has been supposed capable of producing the same effect. And the mistake has arisen from this, that the real operation of faith in the moral improvement of man has not been properly discriminated. What then is that operation, and wherein consists the real power of faith in this important business? When the understanding has been duly enlightened, both as to the objects of belief and matters of practice, it is the office of faith to excite the will and the affections to embrace what is proposed to them, and to obey what is enjoined them. Faith, though not itself the rule of life and manners, is yet the most powerful motive from which obedience to that rule can proceed. Knowledge, though it informs us accurately what we are to do, and lays before us the reasons why we should do it, is yet but a weak

motive to action. Thus it may tell us, that a life of profligacy and debauchery is displeasing to Almighty God, and that He will punish with eternal damnation all who continue in it; but if there be not some other principle to infuse a spirit into this information, and give it a hold upon our affections, no adequate effect will follow. But when by faith we really embrace this great truth as interesting to ourselves; when we do indeed believe, that God is a righteous Judge, and will execute vengeance upon the transgressors of his laws, then are our minds supplied with a motive sufficiently strong to excite our fears, and by those fears to withdraw our affections from evil. Faith places us, in a manner, in the presence of the Almighty, and being truly "the evidence of things not seen," brings them with so lively a representation before our mind's eye, that we feel them with an impression little short of that, which immediately strikes upon our senses. And thus we see with what truth and propriety the fruit of good living is attributed to faith. Even in this view, considered

only as the motive of obedience, it will readily be acknowledged the leading principle of virtuous conduct; and as men constantly attribute their actions to that which formed the motive whence they proceeded, faith being in effect the sole motive of a good life, is entitled to be considered as its sole parent and cause. But in stating this great doctrine, it is necessary to be particularly on our guard against the introduction or encouragement of error. Rightly understood, it is not only true in itself, but of great efficacy and power to make men better in every respect; to increase their piety towards God, to make them more abundant in benevolence towards their fellow-creatures, and more guarded in every personal indulgence: but it is liable also in ignorant and undisciplined minds to great abuse, to become, instead of the motive to obedience, the deadly soporific, whereby the conscience is lulled into a fatal security. And because it is so, because many who pretend to more than ordinary faith are found to possess less than ordinary morality, the value of the principle itself is

depreciated, and that, from which alone true morality can proceed, is reviled, as being in its result unfavourable to real integrity of manners. But why so? Not because it is in itself, or in any consequences fairly deduced from it, contrary to sound morals, but because in one respect ignorant men mistake it, and in another, perverse men misrepresent it. Faith, justly stated, is the surest basis of the fear and the love of God, and of unfeigned good will to man.

Still it may be objected, that though faith, considered in this general view, may be proved not only not unfavourable to virtue, but directly productive of it, the main difficulty is by no means solved. The faith of the Gospel is of a very different nature, and has a different object from that which we have been describing, and does in very express terms exclude the cooperation of morality in the business of salvation. To this I might answer, in the words of the blind man in St. John, when questioned by the Pharisees respecting his miraculous cure, "Why, herein is a marvel-

" lous thing," that it is agreed by the most zealous advocates of faith that it is necessarily productive of a good life, and yet that this necessary produce of faith should be considered as a matter of little importance by some of those advocates themselves. But let us reflect a little. Is it indeed true, that the faith of the Gospel is in its nature and object different from that which we have been describing, and on which religion itself is ultimately founded. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews appears to have thought otherwise. In the text he gives us a definition of faith, and in the following verses he reckons up many instances in which that faith was exemplified; Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. In all these the faith which is so much extolled was a powerful motive to obedience. In Abel it showed itself in a conformity to the ordinances of God; in Enoch it sprang up in that pious walking, which qualified him so eminently for exemption from the common lot of humanity; in Noah it subdued all doubts which could have arisen as to the probability of an universal deluge,

and induced him to prepare for a danger, of which no symptom appeared; and in Abraham it produced such a ready submission to the will of his heavenly Father, as to make it at this day a question, whether we should most admire the faith which gave rise to the obedience, or the obedience which resulted from the faith. What a pity it is, that the wit or the folly, the piety or the perverseness of man, should ever have been employed in separating two things, to the union of which Almighty God has vouchsafed his most decided approbation, by calling him his friend, in whom they were most intimately joined. And that this faith, thus productive and thus operative on the life and manners of those who possessed it, was indeed of the same nature as the faith of the Gospel, appears from the observation with which the Apostle concludes his catalogue of these ancient worthies; "and these all having "obtained a good report through faith, re- "ceived not the promise,.....that they "without us should not be made perfect." In this observation the sacred writer plainly

includes himself and the other followers of Christ under the same description as the ancient professors whom he had been enumerating; and of whom he had indeed said before, that they "confessed themselves "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," that they "sought a better country," and that "God was not ashamed to be called their "God." The faith of these eminent men was then of the same nature as the faith now required of Christians; and when we read of them, that their faith produced a ready compliance with the Will, and a prompt obedience to the commands of God, we may conclude without fear of error, that our faith, to be genuine, must produce the same compliance, and be distinguished by the same obedience.

But yet the objection is not answered. St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, seems so decidedly to determine, that Christians are saved by faith without works[m], that it seems difficult after all to find any place for good morals, or any need of them, in the business of salvation: and if so, the

[m] Galat. ii. 16.

moral tendency of Revelation must be given up at last, in defiance of all the evidence to the contrary that its own records contain. Let us however bring this matter also to the test of a fair examination. Is it probable, that St. Paul, than whom no writer in the whole Bible is more earnest in the reprobation of vice, or more animated in the recommendation of virtue, should so state any doctrine as to discourage integrity of life, or be inconsistent with moral obligation? It would appear not. He tells us expressly, that it was part of his commission, as an Apostle, to "open men's "eyes, and to turn them from Satan to "God," and to "show them the necessity "of doing works meet for repentance[n]." He insists frequently and forcibly upon the appointment of Christ as "Judge of the "world," who will at the last day assign every man his portion according to the "deeds done in the body[o]:" he says plainly, that "tribulation and anguish will be "upon every soul of man that doeth evil, "but glory, honour, and peace to every

[n] Acts xxvi. 18—20. [o] Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10.

" man that worketh good[p];" and he warns his hearers affectionately not to deceive themselves with any false hopes[q], that sin can ever escape the vengeance of God. " Knowing the terror[r]" of the Lord, he says, that he endeavours to persuade men to avoid its effects, by forsaking those iniquities and impurities, against which it is clearly denounced. He tells us of himself, that so far from living in an easy security, satisfied that his faith would save him without care or exertion, he was anxious and watchful, guarding with much solicitude against being hurried away by the impetuosity of passion, and using all the means which appeared best adapted to keep his soul and body in that state of temperance and sobriety[s], which in his opinion the Gospel peremptorily required. Yet he does say, " that a man is justified by faith with- " out the deeds of the Law[t]." Certainly: but of what Law does he speak, and what was the drift of his argument? Nothing can be plainer to those, who will read his

[p] Rom. ii. 9, 10. [q] 1 Cor. vi. 9. Galat. vi. 7.
[r] 2 Cor. v. 11. [s] 1 Cor. ix. 27. [t] Rom. iii. 28.

Epistles to the Romans and Galatians with attention, (and to be understood they must be read with great attention,) than that the Law, against the efficacy and sufficiency of which the Apostle there argues, is the Law of Moses, considered, not as a rule of life capable of being attached to any dispensation, but as a complete method of salvation in itself. As a rule of life he grants, that it was "holy, just, and good[u]," and so far from encouraging sin, that it was by it alone man was enabled to distinguish between right and wrong. But however good it was as a rule of life, as a method of salvation it was wholly inefficient, not so much by its own defect, as by the infirmity of man, who could not fulfil its injunctions. It taught him what was right, but it did not enable him to perform it; it shewed him the perniciousness of sin, but it did not restrain the passions by which he was enticed to commit it. It was like a beacon-light to an exhausted traveller, pointing with great accuracy to the road he should pursue, but affording him no as-

[u] Rom. vii. 12.

sistance whereby the strength he had lost might be recovered, or its want supplied. By such a Law therefore it was impossible that any man should be justified; it was unavoidable that he must be condemned: for as the Law demanded obedience, and obedience was not in his power, on the terms of such a Law he could not but perish. The comparison then that is instituted by the Apostle is not between the Law as requiring obedience, and Faith as setting men free from obedience, but between the Law as a method of salvation independent of a Redeemer, and Faith as a method of salvation through a Redeemer. And what difficulty is there in this? what difficulty is there in seeing and acknowledging that "by the deeds of the Law" thus considered, no man could be saved or justified? For the demand of the Law was unsinning obedience, and "every one" was declared "cursed, that continued not in "all things which were written in the book "of the Law to do them[x]." But as no man did continue in them, it was an in-

[x] Galat. iii. 10.

evitable consequence, that by them no man could be justified: no man could be justified by a Law which required obedience, when he neither did nor could perform that obedience. But then how does this prove, that the faith of Christ as preached in the Gospel does not require sound morals? Because we are become "dead to the Law "by the body of Christ[y]," and He hath set us "free from that yoke of bondage[z]." What then? Is it from observing the Law as a rule of life, or from trusting in it as a method of salvation, that Christ hath set us free? From the latter surely, and not from the former. The question debated between the Judaizers and St. Paul was this, whether they would be saved by the Law or by Christ; not whether they would be saved with or without holiness. The contrast was between the Law and the Gospel, considered as independent of each other; and nothing can be more fallacious or unfounded, than the argument which has been attempted to be drawn from St. Paul's reasoning against the Law in this re-

[y] Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6. [z] Galat. v. 1.

spect, to the exclusion of holiness and integrity as necessary conditions of the Evangelical Covenant. The Apostle himself never proceeds upon such an idea; he never uses any thing that looks like such an argument from one end of his writings to the other: he never opposes the faith of Christ to the obedience of Christ: he never opposes the belief of the Gospel to the works which that Gospel plainly and peremptorily enjoins. If he sets us free from one law, he is careful to place us immediately under another; knowing well, for no man knew our nature better, that human passion needed little encouragement in its career of licentiousness, and could be restrained only by a bond, the breach of which would incur the displeasure of Almighty God. He announces therefore the "Law of faith[a]" and "the Law of Christ[b]" as binding upon Christians; and when he tells them, that they are "made free from "the law of sin and death," he tells them also, that their pardon was obtained, not without law, but through that "Law of the

[a] Rom. iii. 27. [b] Galat. vi. 2.

"spirit of life," under which they came as disciples of "Jesus Christ." And for what does he say that they came under that Law? That "the righteousness of the "Law," that very righteousness, which the Law could not produce before, because it "was weak in the flesh," might now be fulfilled in them. How? By their professing a faith which required no righteousness and no obedience? No: but by their "walking" themselves, "not after the flesh, "but after the spirit[c]." Will it then be said, that "the Law of the spirit of life" is less binding, or that it enjoins less purity or integrity of manners, than "the law of "sin and death?" Will it be said, that he, who asserts our being delivered from the one in order to be placed under the other, intended in any degree to lessen our sense of moral obligation, or to enfeeble our endeavours after moral improvement? If it be, it cannot be considered otherwise than as a foul aspersion upon the brightest star that ever illumined the Christian Church. No man can abuse his authority to traduce

[c] Rom. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

the Christian faith as unfriendly to rectitude of morals, unless he does it wilfully and perversely. He has guarded his argument against misconception in every possible way: he has asserted the necessity of real holiness in mind and manners in the clearest and most forcible terms: he has told us again and again, that when he talks of our being freed from the Law, he does not mean being freed from obligation to obedience, but from inevitable and necessary condemnation; he does not mean that we should cease to serve God, but "that "we should serve in newness of spirit, and "not in the oldness of the letter[d];" "in "newness of spirit," that is, with renovated minds, with sanctified hearts, and a vigour of performance proportioned to the increased knowledge and power with which we have been endowed. If, after this, he is still held up as the abettor of licentiousness, if his words are misrepresented as weakening the sanctions of law, and making it less necessary for the Christian Minister to call men to repentance and obedience,

[d] Rom. vii. 6.

and to prove that the Christian faith itself is the most powerful motive to that obedience, it is in vain for any man to hope by guarding his expressions to prevent their misapplication and abuse. His warning voice however cannot be urged in vain upon the attentive and unprejudiced hearer: and when he entreats us earnestly and affectionately to "let no man deceive us "with vain words[e]," as if sin could ever be committed with impunity under any dispensation, we cannot do less than acknowledge, that if we ever are so deceived, it is not for want of being admonished against the arts of the deceiver; it is not that we are not put upon our guard; but that we choose to attend to a misrepresentation of the Apostle's doctrine, rather than to his own express declaration.

It was impossible, in considering our present subject, not to advert to and examine the discussion, into which the Apostle had occasion to enter with the Judaizing Christians of his day, and which has been so much perverted to the injury of the Chris-

[e] Eph. v. 6.

tian Church; though I fear, that I have in so doing transgressed in some degree the plain rule of Christian preaching set down by the same great Apostle in his Epistle to Titus. He there tells this primitive Bishop, whom he does not disdain to call his partner, that he should avoid "strivings about "the Law as unprofitable and vain;" and should bend his chief endeavours to render the converts to Christianity conspicuous for purity, piety, soberness, and integrity. "These things" he desires him to "affirm "constantly, that they which have believed "in God might be careful to maintain good "works;" and for this reason, because "these things are good and profitable "unto men[f]." I trust however that our inquiry has not trenched greatly upon the spirit of this direction: it is a direction certainly, which not only warrants, but requires the Christian Minister to pay much of his attention to the practical duties of his religion, and the obligation under which the professors of that religion lie to perform them. So far should they be from

[f] Titus iii. 8, 9.

considering the Christian faith hostile to works of righteousness and integrity, and what is commonly called morality, that the faith itself should be considered and represented as adding greatly, both to the obligation of obedience, and the vigour with which it is to be discharged, as at once binding it on the conscience, and exciting the mind to observe it. For who were they, who were to be exhorted to a careful performance of good works? Not such as knew nothing and cared nothing about the faith of Christ, and trusted for salvation to their own exertions; but "they who had "believed in God;" they who had been converted to Christianity, and were already possessed of the faith, about which we are inquiring: they were required, because they had that faith, to shew in their lives and manners its purifying effect and sanctifying influence. Their faith was to be a motive to their obedience; because they believed, therefore they were to be called upon for the performance of good works. And indeed how could it be otherwise? Divesting ourselves as much as possible of

controversial feeling, and looking at the Gospel of Christ as a divine scheme for the salvation of man, nothing surely can be more excellently contrived to deter him from sin, and incite him to virtue, to encourage and to enable him for the discharge of all those duties, in the performance of which both his perfection and his happiness consist. The eternal Son of God did indeed graciously condescend to unite himself with the debased and enfeebled and lost race of Adam, that being capable of suffering in that nature which had incurred the wrath of God by sin, He might by his suffering make an atonement for the transgressions of his brethren. And it is most assuredly by the merit of this atonement, that the gate of mercy has been thrown open to mankind, that there is any hope of acceptance with God, and any refuge from his indignation. Of this hope we become partakers by faith, and believing in sincerity the revelation, which Jesus Christ has made of the way of salvation, we attain by that way a prospect of life and immortality. Jesus Christ is emphatically

our Saviour: and as "there is none other "name given unto man whereby he may "be saved[g]," so by believing on that name an assurance of being saved is afforded him. But let the consequences of this be well weighed. We believe on Christ as our Saviour. And if we do so, can we with any decency refuse to receive Him in any other character in which He is represented, either in the prophecies which foretold his coming, or the histories which have recorded his actions? Surely not: if we pretend to rely upon Christ for salvation, we must surrender ourselves to Him without reserve. The more free his salvation is, the less we have been able to contribute to it ourselves, the more are we bound to follow his will in preference to our own, and to attend to Him in whatever way He may require our attention. Now nothing can be clearer than that the character of Christ as our Saviour is not understood, unless he be distinctly recognized in his three offices, as our Priest, our Prophet, and our King. Too frequently, and by

[g] Acts iv. 12.

those who would seem to preach the Christian faith most correctly, the salvation wrought by Christ is attributed to his priesthood only, and the attention confined exclusively to the sacrifice He offered on our behalf. God forbid, that the value of that sacrifice should ever be diminished or obscured: but he who hopes to be benefited by what Christ did as a Priest, must undoubtedly receive his instructions as a Prophet, and obey his laws as a King. We rely upon the merits of Christ's passion for remission of our sins, and final acceptance with God. Granted. And shall we, who look for so inestimable a benefit from his sufferings, neglect what He has taught, and transgress what He has commanded? What would this be in common life, in the intercourse of man with man, but base delusion and hypocrisy: and shall it be called sanctity in religion? Common sense forbids it: and it must never be forgotten, that common sense enters as much into the determinations of religion, as into the every day business of the world. The rules of its decision are precisely the same in this case as

in the ordinary transactions of life; and what would be deceitful in a bargain with men, is deceitful in a covenant with God. When therefore we look to Christ for the pardon of our sins, with what face can we do so, unless we are willing to receive and to obey all that He has revealed, and all that He has commanded? If we really believe in Jesus Christ, we must surely believe in Him as the word of God presents Him to us; we must receive Him entirely as He is there delineated; and we cannot hope to be benefited by one part of his character, unless we pay equal respect to every other. We cannot be allowed to pick and choose here, as it may suit our fancies or our purposes. Many and deplorable are the errors which have arisen from attempts of this kind; but they are attempts to which the Scripture gives no countenance. Christ is there described in his three important offices; and as He is there described, so must we receive Him. It is in his whole character that He is the adequate object of our faith. We must not, with the Socinian, accept him as a

Teacher only, however high we may esteem Him in that respect: we must not, with the mad enthusiasts of former days, withdraw our obedience from human authority, under pretence of paying exclusive homage to the Majesty of Jesus: nor yet can we be permitted, with those who profess a better creed, to make the Gospel which he preached consist only of one article, though that one article be indeed the very basis of our hopes. If we would believe in Christ without fraud, we must receive the whole Gospel which He preached. But what is the whole Gospel? Does it consist of promises only? Does it contain nothing but a declaration, that God for Christ's sake will pardon our sins? If so, we may no doubt confine our belief to this point alone. But that it is not so, every man, who will read the Gospel with his eyes open, cannot but perceive and acknowledge. The Gospel abounds in moral instructions and moral declarations. It contains the most awful denunciations against sin, and the most animating encouragements to virtue. Almost every page of it

presents us with some precept of our Saviour's, that very Saviour on whom we profess to rely; enjoining us to cultivate piety, justice, and sobriety; or some menace, threatening the worst of punishments to such as should transgress the laws of God. Are these precepts and these threatenings, thus interwoven into the very body of the Gospel, uttered by Jesus Christ himself, and most solemnly sanctioned by his authority, no part of the Gospel? Is it no part of the Gospel, and is it no point of belief required by that Gospel, that there will at the last day be a general resurrection both of the just and unjust; that Jesus Christ has been expressly appointed by Almighty God to judge the whole race of men at that day, and that He will assign them their several portions according to their behaviour in this life? Is this revealed, or not? And if it be revealed, was it recorded, that it should be believed or not? "Jesus Christ," we are told, "brought "life and immortality to light through the "Gospel[h]:" and if life and immortality

[h] 2 Tim. i. 10.

were brought to light through the Gospel, they must surely be prominent parts of that Gospel; and, in believing the Gospel, we must be called upon especially to believe these parts of it. But a belief of a judgment to come, in which every man's portion will be assigned according to his works, and of an immortality which will make that portion eternal, cannot be unattended with some powerful effects upon the life and manners of those who sincerely embrace it: it must operate strongly in restraining the commission of evil, and inciting to the practice of virtue.

Thus then, I trust, it appears, that the doctrine of Faith, properly understood, is so far from being unfavourable to sound morals, that it will be found the most efficacious principle upon which sound morals can be inculcated. But then it must be properly understood. The Gospel is a noble system of great and important truths; and in order to comprehend it, all those truths must be considered. And not only so: there are many things necessary to be known previous to our entering upon the

Gospel itself. This all men, who have reflected upon the subject, readily admit. The being of God, his providential government of the world, the obligation of man to obey His laws; these are all truths which the Gospel, strictly taken, supposes to be already known from preceding revelations; at least our Saviour himself, who was sent more expressly to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, proceeds upon the supposition of their being known and acknowledged as direct sources of duty. When He preached his Gospel, He preached it certainly as an improvement of moral knowledge, and as a more perfect delineation of duty to God and man; but not as in any degree relaxing the bonds of any previous moral obligation. And to make his intention in this respect clear, the mode of preaching adopted by him, who was especially commissioned to carry the Gospel among such as had lost the knowledge of the true God, is admirably calculated. He could not preach Christ, the Son of God, to those who did not know God himself: he could not offer remission of sins

to men who were not yet convinced that they had any sins to be remitted. He began then with instructing them in the first principles of all religion; with teaching them to know that Almighty Being[i], who made and governs the universe, and to whom all their obedience was due. He bent his first endeavours to turn the ignorant heathens from the vain idols they had hitherto served, to that living God, from whom as they derived all they had, so to Him they ought to have directed all their worship and service. Being thus instructed, they would be prepared for the mercies of the Gospel; they would see that the life they had hitherto led was directly in violation of their duty to their Creator, and that it became them well to repent in dust and ashes; and they would receive with thankful hearts those glad tidings, which assured them, that though they had sinned, they had "an Advocate with the Father," who would effectually plead their cause, and obtain their pardon. But they would not

[i] Acts xiv. 15. xvii. 22. xxvi. 18. The speech at Athens deserves to be thoroughly studied.

so far mistake this pardon as to think, that because it secured them from the punishment of their past transgressions, it set them more at liberty to disregard the obligations of duty in their future conduct. Their previous instruction would prevent this error. Having been taught, that, by their former idolatry and immorality, they had robbed God of his honour, and transgressed his laws, they could not think, that the Gospel, which laid its foundation in explaining their duty to the Almighty, and calling upon them to repent of their sins, could intend in any manner to weaken their obligation to that duty, or make it safer for them to follow their sins. How differently do many preach the Gospel at present! Looking only at one point in that Divine Revelation, and considering the rest as of little use and importance, and requiring no preparation of previous knowledge in their hearers, they tell them at once, to "be- "lieve in Jesus Christ and they shall be "saved[k]." And they tell them a great and interesting truth: but those, who hear

[k] Acts xvi. 31.

it, are not always qualified to understand it. They have not yet been long enough the disciples of the Baptist, to make them fit for the Mightier Teacher, who succeeded him: they have not yet sufficiently understood the nature of repentance, to be capable of receiving with safety the pardon of their sins: they have not sat long enough in the lower form of moral discipline, before they are pressed on to the higher mysteries of evangelical truth. It is astonishing to think, that when Almighty God judged it necessary to send an authorized messenger before the face of his Son, to prepare his way, and to declare that the preparation required was to consist in repentance, any man can so far mistake the nature of the Gospel as to imagine, that the remission it promises can in any case be applied without repentance. But this is not the only fault that has been committed. The faith itself is not explained; the character of Christ is not opened: even his own precepts, his own laws, his own threatenings are not made a part of his own Gospel. Faith confined to

one article of the Christian creed is made the whole of religion; and those, who dare to urge the injunctions of the Gospel, and the commandments and the laws of God, are condemned as the enemies of God and of Christ, defamers of the Gospel, and teachers of a morality with which the power and the purity of faith cannot consist. The unkindness of this reflection we cannot but lament, but its justice we can never allow. Its absurdity is indeed palpable enough. None certainly have a greater regard for the faith of the Gospel, and none show that regard in a more becoming manner, than they who press upon their hearers with an earnestness, answerable to their own conviction, the necessity of "adorning that faith by denying all un-"godliness and worldly lusts, and living "soberly, righteously, and godly[1]" in this our pilgrimage upon earth. Laying their foundation deep in the first principles of all religion, in the knowledge of God and his attributes, and the moral obligations thence arising, and applying the gracious

[1] Titus ii. 10, 11, 12.

consolations of faith to calm and encourage the awakened conscience, they take the best method to build up the man of God, and prepare him by the practice of virtue here for the enjoyment of happiness hereafter.

But still it will be asked, is not this to set up our own righteousness, to claim heaven as the reward of our own merit, and to reject the justification procured for us by the atonement of Jesus Christ? There is not surely a more deplorable instance, or a more prominent proof, of the corruption of our common nature, than this accusation, which is brought by one set of Christ's ministers against another. That true faith will effectually bring forth the fruit of good living is our common tenet. But because one part of us think it necessary to insist largely upon moral obligation, and upon the distinction, which the Gospel itself assures us will at the last day be made between the righteous and the wicked, between "him that serveth "God and him that serveth Him not," we are condemned by another set of men

as destroying the faith, and erecting a system of salvation independent of Jesus Christ. But let us mark their inconsistency in this accusation. They would be offended, and many of them, I firmly believe, would be justly offended, if we said, that they did not observe the rules of integrity prescribed by the Gospel in discharging their duties to God and man. But with them this attention to duty is the necessary fruit of faith, the sign whereby it is seen that they have that faith, the proper expression of their gratitude to God for having distinguished them by so excellent a gift. And why should it not be so with us? why should not our endeavours, if honest and sincere, to obey the precepts of the Gospel, be blessed with as consolatory a hope of acceptance at the throne of Grace, and be as well thought of in the Church of Christ? No: in us it is formality, external decency, heathen morality, and little better than a deistical rejection of our Saviour. Is this "charity?" Is this that heavenly virtue, placed by St. Paul above faith and hope, which "envieth not, vaunteth not

"itself, is not puffed up;" which "bear-
"eth all things and believeth all things[m];"
and therefore would be very unlikely to discredit the assertion of those, who, while they insist upon the necessity of obedience to the precepts of Christ, insist upon it as a part of His Gospel, and as the offspring of that very faith, for the maintenance of which we are all equally concerned. Let us beware, lest that come upon us, which St. Paul threatened to the Galatians; "If
"ye bite and devour one another, take
"heed that ye be not consumed one of
"another[n]." There are enemies enow about us, ready to take advantage of our miscarriages, enemies to the faith, and enemies to the morality of the Gospel; some, who hate the first, because they will not submit to the latter; and others who deny the latter, because they would make the former a cloak for their sins. Against both we must preach the necessity of true faith and pure morals: we must show how these two parts of the Gospel are necessarily united; and in order to show it ef-

[m] 1 Cor. xiii. [n] Gal. v. 15.

fectually, the subject must be fully considered and thoroughly explained. The Gospel must not be confined to a single point, but every point must be brought forward, placed in its proper light, and assigned its due importance. The mind must be gradually opened to receive it, must understand its own various relations, and be taught to feel its own wants and weaknesses. It will then be prepared to receive the Gospel in its perfection and integrity, and to appreciate the value of Faith according to its own just weight, as a principle at once assuring us of pardon for our former transgressions, and exciting us effectually to make earnest and vigorous endeavours after future obedience.

SERMON VIII.

2 Timothy ii. 19.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

THERE yet remains one point of great importance, which may appear not altogether consistent with the view we have taken of the bearing and tendency of Revelation, and that is the doctrine of Election. To the consideration of this doctrine I approach certainly with much diffidence, and with an unfeigned desire of submitting whatever I may say upon it to the superior judgment and better information of those before whom I speak. It should seem indeed, that every man ought to come to the examination of this subject with a mind

entirely free from any prejudice, on one side or the other. For what is the very matter of this question? It is not a point of human duty, either to the Creator, or those who are partakers with us of the same dependence upon his Will; but it is an act of the Almighty himself, a determination of his unerring wisdom, respecting which we are called upon to deliberate. It surely becomes us then to deliberate with caution, with temper, and with moderation, and with a full purpose not to transgress the bounds of Christian charity.

For in regard to this subject it must be confessed at once, that we can know nothing but what it has pleased God to reveal in his Word; and we shall be in danger, by indulging even in the best exercise of our reason, of falling into some degree of error. Not that the clear deductions of reason can ever lead to error, where the subject is completely before it; but because in this case, where the inquiry relates to an act of God's infallible wisdom and sovereign Will, our reason cannot be in possession of all the circumstances upon

which that act proceeds. Our recourse therefore, in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion upon this point, must be, I conceive, exclusively to the declarations of God's holy Word. There, by a patient investigation, we must endeavour to discover the intent and purpose of our heavenly Father; and whatever on such an investigation that purpose shall appear to be, to that we must assuredly adhere. In the following discourse it is proposed to consider, whether there be really such a doctrine as that of Election in the Scripture itself; if there be, what representation is there made of its character and tendency; and lastly, what effect that character may have, either to encourage or discountenance sound morals and pure religion.

First then, is the doctrine of Election in Scripture or not? The doctrine of Election may be understood in two ways; either as the choosing out of mankind some individuals or communities for the enjoyment of peculiar advantages temporal or spiritual in this world, or the selecting some individuals as partakers of eternal happiness in

the next. With regard to Election in the first sense, there will be little difficulty in allowing, that many instances of it occur in the historical records of holy Writ. The Jewish nation in general were chosen as God's peculiar people, distinguished by peculiar marks of his favour, endowed with a superior knowledge of his Will, invested with superior privileges, and placed under the more immediate protection of the common Father of mankind. And this favour they enjoyed, because they were the elect people of God, "the children of Jacob, "his chosen ones[a]," called indeed the "children of God himself, who were an "holy people to Him, and whom He had "chosen above all the nations that were "upon the earth[b]." Nothing certainly can be more evident, than that the Israelites became God's people by his freely choosing them as such. It was the unconstrained favour of the Almighty which separated them from the rest of the descendants of Adam, and formed them into that remarkable community which had the high

[a] 1 Chron. xvi. 13. [b] Deut. xiv. 1, 2.

honour of being called peculiarly His. Abraham was selected when he was in the midst of an idolatrous people, and most probably an idolater himself, but evidently in such circumstances, as without this Divine interference, would have involved his posterity in an irretrievable ignorance of the true God. The only effectual check to the rapid degeneracy, which was corrupting and debasing the whole race of man, was that act of free mercy on the part of our compassionate Creator, whereby He determined to rescue one family at least from the state of sin and wretchedness into which the rest were rapidly falling, and into which they, if left to themselves, must also have inevitably fallen. But that they were not left to themselves was no act of theirs; it was the merciful hand of God, unthought of and uncalled for, which raised them up from their unhappy condition, while their brethren around them were in comparison passed by, unheeded and unassisted. Around the fathers of this favoured tribe the Omnipotent was pleased to throw a shield of defence which no danger could

penetrate, and to command all, among whom they came, that they should "do "his prophets no harm," nor presume to "touch his anointed[c]." He exercised them indeed by many and various trials, but He still conducted them in safety, till He placed them in that holy land, which his sovereign Will had marked out so long before as their destined habitation[d]. And here He maintained them for many revolving years as his own people, honoured with the more immediate symbols of his Divine presence, and objects in an especial and extraordinary manner of his peculiar care and providence. Though subjected like their neighbours to the vicissitudes of adversity and prosperity, they were yet preserved as "the people of God:" neither tyrannical oppression, nor deceitful circumvention, nor the cruellest persecution, could effect their destruction. Comparatively weak and few in number, they still existed, and existed as "the chosen" of the Almighty, in defiance of those overwhelming revolutions, which had overturn-

[c] 1 Chron. xvi. 22. [d] Deut. xxxii. 8, 9, 10.

ed the mightiest empires, and scarcely left the record of their names among men. But when the fulness of time came, this nation, so long favoured, was in a manner discarded by the same unfettered decision of Divine wisdom, which had first called it to a state of such remarkable distinction: "the kingdom of God was taken from "them, and given to another people[e]," and that people became thus the Elect of the Almighty. This will be readily acknowledged. Christians are frequently distinguished by this title in the writings of the New Testament. Our Saviour tells his disciples plainly, that He "chose them[f];" and St. Paul is very express, that God had "chosen those," who from the Gentiles were "called unto the adoption of chil-"dren[g]." And in truth, it is evident from the circumstances in which those Gentiles were at the time, that it must have been so; and as evident from the mode in which the Gospel was propagated among them, that so it was. Of all the nations in the world at that time, except the Jews, the

[e] Matth. xxi. 43. [f] John xv. 16—19. [g] Eph. i. 4, 5.

prophetic description of Isaiah was perfectly correct, that God "was found of "them that sought Him not;" and that the sole means by which they knew any thing of Him was, that He sent his messengers to say, "Behold me, behold me," unto such, as till then, "were not called "by his name[h]." In conformity with this idea, the Apostles generally address their Epistles to the Elect, meaning thereby beyond a doubt all those, who whether sincerely or otherwise, whether with persevering integrity or vacillating infirmity, had made an open profession of the Christian Faith, and been admitted into the Christian Church. On the rejection of the Israelites these became the chosen ones of God, and the Church in which they were collected, as one united community, was his peculiar kingdom. The establishment of this kingdom amongst men, and the calling of any particular nations or individuals into it, was entirely the act of Almighty God, under the direction of his wisdom, and according to the determination of his Will[i].

[h] Isaiah lxv. 1. [i] Acts ii. 39.

All Divine Revelation is the free gift of God, and He has therefore a right to bestow it when and where, in what degree and in what manner, may seem to Him best. What man has from himself, in his present state of imbecility and corruption, is a continual tendency to degenerate; and if at any time that tendency is retarded by the communication of better knowledge, and the infusion of a better spirit, it is his duty to receive both as the unmerited bounty of his heavenly Father. When therefore the Patriarchs of the Jewish nation were called from the degradation of idolatry, and when the Gentiles had first the glad tidings of the Gospel imparted to them, in either case the proceeding emanated entirely from the free grace of Almighty God. Had He left them to themselves, they would never have inquired for Him; and therefore that they ever knew Him, and knew how to serve Him acceptably, resulted from His goodness, not theirs; from His compassionate regard for them, not their love and veneration for Him. In bestowing these his gifts and blessings therefore, God pro-

ceeded, as He had an undoubted right to do, in the way which to Himself appeared best; selecting freely, though according to his wisdom, such objects as He thought proper to distinguish by marks of his especial favour. Those, who came into the Christian Church, did not come till they were called; and those only were called whom the Omniscient thought proper to call. Of this we have one or two remarkable instances. St. Paul was on one occasion "forbidden to preach in Asia; and "when he assayed to go into Bithynia, the "Spirit suffered him not[k]." But he had an especial direction to go and "preach in "Macedonia;" his heavenly Master judging it best, that his labours should then be bestowed upon that particular portion of the globe. The Macedonians were thus elected at that time in preference to the Asians and Bithynians, for wise reasons no doubt; but still they were elected, according to the predetermination of Him, who had a right certainly to distribute his own gifts as He pleased. It may perhaps not

[k] Acts xvi. 6—10.

be impossible, in the course of our inquiry, to obtain some insight into the reasons of this election: at present I only remark, that they were preferred, and preferred by the express order of the Holy Ghost. And this is a point which ought to be considered. Christianity is at this day confined to a small portion of the world. While some enjoy the splendor of that meridian light which the Gospel diffuses, others are involved in impenetrable darkness. And what reason can be assigned, why we of this nation, for instance, should be so highly favoured as we are in the preaching of God's pure word, while others are wholly ignorant of its blessed contents, but that it has pleased God to impart it to us? When we look back to the state of our ancestors, either in one part of the island or the other, we see nothing but the most barbarous idolatry; and from that idolatry nothing has rescued us their descendants, but the communication of better knowledge by the diffusion of Gospel light among us. It is not surely because we are better than our fathers, or that we could by our own inge-

nuity have detected their errors, that we possess a more perfect knowledge of God, and purer ideas of his service, than they: had we been left to ourselves, we should undoubtedly have been immersed in the same ignorance, and disgraced by the same barbarity of manners. That we are Christ's therefore, and thus amongst God's elect, in that sense of the word which we are now considering, is owing entirely to our being called out of our state of degeneracy by those, who were first commissioned to instruct us. Almighty God chose us as objects of his bounty and benevolence. It is the effect of that choice, that we have amongst us a Christian Church, and that by means of the light derived from this lamp of Divine truth our minds are enlarged, our affections purified, our manners amended, our laws ameliorated, and the whole system of our social intercourse conducted upon purer and better principles. Nothing of all this has been brought about by our own unassisted exertions. It was the goodness of God, that sent his appointed servants to sow amongst us the seed of

that heavenly knowledge, which is now indeed so common as to be little esteemed, but which would never have been acquired had it not been bestowed: and it is the harvest, which has arisen from that seed, to which the most enlightened among us are indebted for their intellectual eminence, and to which the country itself is indebted for every thing it can boast of, in rational piety and moral integrity.

But it may be said, that all this is little to the purpose. It may be readily acknowledged, that there is an Election of some nations rather than others to the external privileges and advantages of the Gospel, and even to that superiority of attainments which usually attends those external privileges: but the real point of inquiry does not hinge upon this. An Election of some, whether nations or individuals, rather than others, to the use of better means of improvement in this world may be granted, and yet it will not follow, that there is any Election of individuals to eternal happiness in the world to come. Certainly not. But still, it is not only expedient, but ne-

cessary, that this Election of nations and individuals should be remarked, for two reasons: first, because this is clearly the account which the Scripture gives us of the Divine proceedings; secondly, that we may not forget from what source we have derived the advantages we enjoy. These observations will teach us, that there is a sense in which the doctrine of Election is a Scripture doctrine; that it is consistent with the Divine wisdom and goodness to choose when and where the blessings of Revelation shall be communicated; that as the Jews were formerly, so Christians are now, the Elect people of God, and that they owe this distinction to the free grace of Him who called them. Those therefore who admit this truth, will be careful not to overrate the powers of their own minds, even while they exercise themselves with diligence and industry in the due improvement of the talents they have received; they will arrogate nothing to themselves, as if they either had or could have merited the preeminence they enjoy; they will have no difficulty in acknowledging, that they

have derived it from God's free, undeserved bounty, and that as they obtained it, so they are entitled to it only as the elect people of God, upon whom it has been his good pleasure to bestow it. And acknowledging this, they will be better prepared to inquire, with temper and impartiality, whether there be not a yet more peculiar sense in which the doctrine of Election is to be received; whether in fact, as nations and individuals owe the advantages they possess of superior knowledge and more abundant assistance to their being elected to such advantages, individuals do not in like manner owe the salvation of their souls to the free and unmerited Election of God. This part of the question, it must be confessed, is at once important and difficult; important, as it so nearly touches our eternal interests; and difficult, because it has been the subject of so much irreconcileable contention. But perhaps it will be found, that the difficulty has arisen less from the doctrine itself, than from the manner in which it has been treated. By many, the two senses of Election have been confound-

ed; and passages of Scripture, which belong exclusively to that sense in which all Christians are said to be God's Elect, have been adduced to prove the truth of the doctrine as applied to the eternal condition of individuals. Thus it is, that St. Paul has been supposed so great an advocate for this point of faith. Possibly this Apostle may have some few observations, which seem to apply immediately to personal Election, but the general drift of his argument, when closely examined, will be found to lie in quite a different direction. That argument will never be understood, unless it be considered with a strict regard to the occasion which gave rise to it. All writings indeed, to be understood, require to be so considered, but the writings of St. Paul demand this kind of attention in a peculiar manner. As far as they relate to doctrinal difficulties, they almost invariably turn upon some point in controversy between himself and his countrymen, respecting the permanence and necessity of their Law as the only acceptable method of salvation, and upon their own claim to be

exclusively the Elect people of God. It is this latter point that he is stating, when he enters so much at large in several of his Epistles, particularly in those to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Ephesians, upon the question of God's Election. And he states it thus. The Jews maintained, that God Almighty was in a peculiar sense the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and that as they were the direct descendants of those Patriarchs, He was consequently their God, and they his people, in the same peculiar manner, and that this peculiar relation between Him and them was to continue unimpaired for ever. This appears clearly to be the claim put in on their part; and the Apostle answers it, by the following plain observations. It is granted, that God Almighty was peculiarly the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that the Jews, as their descendants, were God's peculiar people: but how did it happen to be so? Was it not by the free choice which Almighty God made of those Patriarchs, and of their descendants after them? Was not this choice quite uncon-

strained? Might not the Almighty, had He so pleased, have chosen any other family out of the mass of mankind? When He called Abraham from amongst his idolatrous countrymen, was it not an act of his sovereign Will? Had the Patriarch any right to this distinction? When the blessing of the Covenant was given to Jacob in preference to his elder brother, was it not so given because the Omniscient Creator of the universe, according to his own all-wise purpose, judged it best that it should be so given? It was a free gift, and therefore surely to be bestowed according to the unrestrained will of the Giver. The Election of the Jews therefore to be God's peculiar people was clearly owing to the good pleasure of Him, who had so chosen them; they had no right, no claim to this distinction; it flowed entirely from the unmerited bounty, the unconstrained beneficence of their heavenly Father. What then? Because God had once freely chosen them to be his people, had He forfeited the right, either of rejecting them again, or of bestowing his favour upon any other nation?

Could He be kind to none else, because He had been kind to them? And had He, by his gracious condescension and liberal bounty to the Jews, given them a right to interfere with his proceedings, when he chose to show the same condescension and the same bounty to others? Certainly not: though such is the nature of man, that he is ever ready to construe the possession of any blessing, how freely soever it was bestowed at first, not only into something of an exclusive claim, but into a proof also that he has something of merit whereby he has deserved it. And thus the Jews argued; they had been God's Elect, and therefore they had for ever a right to be exclusively considered as his Elect. But the Apostle shows them, that the argument lay completely the other way; it proved precisely the reverse of what they supposed. Having demonstrated in the clearest manner, that Almighty God did at first choose the Israelites out of his own free will, and that as the Sovereign Lord of the universe He had a right to bestow his favours where He pleased, and to choose to himself what

people He pleased, he proves plainly, that the very argument, which the Jews adduced to support their exclusive claim, was most directly against any exclusive claims whatever. For surely, if God Almighty had freely chosen the Jews, without any claim on their part to be so chosen, it was perfectly competent for the same Supreme Authority to choose any other people, at any time and in any manner He pleased. It was the free grace of the Giver that extended the Divine bounty to them, and the same free grace might certainly extend the same bounty to others. The Jews were an example, that those who had no right to God's goodness, might yet be partakers of that goodness; and St. Paul endeavours to convince them, that they should have been taught, by the liberality of their heavenly Father to themselves, to see the probability of the same liberality being ultimately extended to others their fellow-creatures; at least they should have been taught to acknowledge, that He had a right thus to extend his liberality, whenever his wisdom might judge it expedient. He had been

kind and gracious to them when they little deserved his grace and kindness, and therefore He might assuredly be as kind and gracious to others, though they had no merit to deserve it. What then is the object of the Apostle's argument? The extension clearly of the Divine mercy to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. He is arguing, and with that force which is so peculiar to him, against the narrow, partial, and contracted view, which the majority of his countrymen had taken of the Divine proceedings. He maintains indeed, what every rational Christian must maintain in the fullest extent, the right of Almighty God to bestow his blessings when and how and upon whom He pleased, because no human being whatever had any claim to his bounty; but he makes use of this right, not to contract the limits of Divine bounty, but to enlarge them; not to confine the issues of Divine goodness within the narrow circle of his own tribe or country, but to extend it as far as the wisdom of God might see fit that it should reach. It is for the enlargement of God's Election there-

fore that the Apostle is arguing; and if this view of his reasoning be correct, as I am persuaded it is, he who has been usually cited as the great advocate for a restriction of the Divine blessings, will be found to plead powerfully for that enlargement. And would to God, that Christians in this and the preceding ages had imbibed something of the same enlarged spirit! Then we should use this precious doctrine of Election, not to condemn, but to comfort each other; not to contract, but to expand the bounds of the Divine mercy; not to bolster up our pride, by exclusive claims to the bounty and protection of the Almighty, but in humility to confess, that as we have ourselves no right to that bounty, and yet hope for it, so it may possibly be extended to many, who, though externally less favoured, may be perhaps ultimately not less entitled to it than we: then would our minds be enlarged and not narrowed by reading, that "God hath concluded all "in unbelief, that He might have mercy "upon all[1]." So far indeed is St. Paul

[1] Rom. xi. 32.

from affording any support to that self-flattering conceit, which would confine the free grace of an all-bounteous Benefactor to one small corner of the world, or one little party in the countless multitudes of the human race, that there is no idea which he seems more to detest, than the notion of setting bounds to the goodness of God. He is an advocate certainly for God's right to bestow that bounty as He pleases, but he opposes strongly every attempt on the part of man to arrest its current, or to set up any exclusive claim to its blessings.

Still, though the doctrine of Election is thus clearly inculcated and largely illustrated by the Apostle, it may be doubted, whether his view of the subject took in the Election of individuals to eternal happiness: it seems to be confined in a great degree to a consideration of the Divine proceedings with respect to a communication of the means of salvation, rather than of salvation itself. And if so, what has been observed will refer only to Election in the first sense. But there are some passages certainly which seem to go further. In the first sense we

have seen, that all the Jews were the elect people of God; and that all Christians, all members of Christ's Church, are his elect people now. But it is plain that our Saviour himself makes a distinction between the members of his Church; and shows, that all who are equal partakers of its external privileges, will not be equal partakers of those ultimate advantages, for the attainment of which that Church was established. In one remarkable instance, and on one remarkable occasion, He is very explicit in declaring a difference between an election to the outward advantages of the Gospel, and an Election to its final blessings. Judas Iscariot was equally an Apostle with the other eleven; our Lord had chosen him. Yet he was a bad man, and Jesus Christ knew that he would continue a bad man. "Have I not chosen you twelve," says he in one place, "and one of you is a devil[m]?" And in another, "I speak not of you all: I "know whom I have chosen: but that the "Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eat- "eth bread with me hath lifted up his

[m] John vi. 70.

"heel against me[n]." The word "chosen" in these two passages seems to be used in two different senses: in the first it refers to the office of an Apostle; in the second, to the attainment of ultimate happiness in the kingdom of the Messiah. And it is very remarkable, and deserves our most serious attention, that our Saviour, in this latter instance, assigns the reason why Judas Iscariot was chosen to be an Apostle. There was a deed to be done, which none but a very bad man would do; a deed, which while it was a cause of unutterable woe to the perpetrator, was yet necessary to the redemption and salvation of mankind. For the perpetration of this deed Judas was unhappily fitted by the corruption of his own heart; and he was chosen an Apostle, that by betraying his Master the Scripture might be fulfilled, which foretold that He should be betrayed. But our Lord thinks it necessary to vindicate his own Omniscience by declaring, that though He chose such a man, He was not for a moment imposed upon by his hypocrisy: He knew what he

[n] John xiii. 18.

was, and He knew what he would do. And the same knowledge, it must be granted, that He has of all who ever have belonged to his Church, or who ever will belong to it. He "knows his sheep[o]" in all quarters of the world; He knows whom He has chosen. When St. Paul was dispirited by the opposition of his countrymen at Corinth, the Lord by a vision exhorted him not to be "afraid, but to speak, and not "hold his peace, because He had much "people in that city[p]." Of the people thus said to be His by our Lord himself, it is impossible to conceive, but they were of the number of those sheep, whom He knew to be ready to hear his voice, to become his faithful followers, and truly to believe, and steadily to obey his word. But of these, as of others, that must no doubt be true, which our Saviour says of his first disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I "have chosen you[q]." The commencement of that union into which believers are admitted with their Saviour, is founded in his call, not in their independent endea-

[o] John x. 14. [p] Acts xviii. 9, 10. [q] John xv. 16.

vours. He came to seek and to save that which was lost; but in order that it might be saved, it was necessary that He should first seek it. And on this account He so repeatedly tells us, that "no man can come "unto Him, except God draw him[r];" that they that "are of God hear God's words[s];" that He "hath chosen his disciples out of "the world[t];" that they "are given him "of his Father, and that of those who were "so given Him, it was his Father's good "pleasure that none should be lost, but be "raised up again at the last day[u]." To the eye of our Redeemer not only was the whole scheme of redemption open, but all the objects also, to whom that scheme would be ultimately beneficial, were known. When therefore our Saviour speaks of his "Elect people[x]," and of those "for "whom the kingdom of heaven was pre-"pared[y];" when He makes a distinction between "the good seed which was sown "by himself, and the tares which were

[r] John vi. 44. [s] John viii. 47. [t] John xv. 19. [u] John vi. 37—39. xvii. 6. [x] Matt. xxiv. 24. Luke xviii. 7. [y] Matt. xxv. 34.

"sown by his enemy[z];" and when he draws a line of separation between "the "children of light and the children of the "world[a];" He must be understood, I conceive, to intimate, that the final result of the plan of redemption was all before God, and that in consequence every thing was arranged so as best to carry that plan into effect. Nothing could happen which was not provided for; nothing could happen which would not ultimately further the purpose of Almighty God. And on examination it will appear, that all the Apostles deliver themselves in accordance with this idea. We have already seen, that the general argument of St. Paul has been misstated, as if he designed to narrow the limits of God's mercy: and yet there are a few passages which seem to go clearly to the establishment of the doctrine of personal Election. Two of these are remarkable. In the first he enters a caveat against being misunderstood in speaking of the rejection of his countrymen. Never did the love of country and of countrymen

[z] Matt. xiii. 27, 28. [a] Luke xvi. 8.

burn with a purer flame than in the bosom of St. Paul. For their sakes he would himself have been content to have lost the high station which he held in the Church of Christ. And though he was compelled to admit, that they had been generally rejected, and upon their rejection the Gentiles had come in, yet he maintains that "blindness had happened to them in part" only, and that there was still "a remnant "according to the election of grace[b]." To support this, he adduces a very observable instance from the earlier history of his nation. In that general apostasy of the kingdom of Israel, when Elias, an eminent prophet of God, complained, that he was left alone of all his true servants, God tells him, that whatever might appear to him, He had yet reserved to himself "seven thou-"sand men[c]," even in the seemingly universal corruption of the times. These were his Elect; these were they, over whom his protecting arm had been thrown in a peculiar manner, and to whom had been vouchsafed the peculiar graces of his Holy Spirit.

[b] Rom. xi. 5—25. [c] 1 Kings xviii. 19.

This must be granted; for nothing less could have preserved them from overwhelming oppression; and from a corruption that the prophet thought was universal. And from this exception to the great apostasy at that time, the Apostle takes occasion to illustrate the state of his countrymen in his own days. Though the Jews did very generally reject the Messiah, yet there were a few, who gave the world a pattern of faith and obedience worthy the long race of pious ancestors from whom they were descended. But these were they whom God foreknew, the "remnant ac-"cording to Election," whom, amidst all the calamities and all the vices of the nation, it pleased Him to save, by the especial protection of his providence, and the especial direction of his grace.

Another passage in which the Apostle seems clearly to intimate, that the eye of God rests with peculiar attention upon those who shall finally be admitted to the mansions of eternal happiness, is that of which my text forms a part. St. Paul is giving Timothy directions to shun as much

as possible all unprofitable disputation: and in order to shew how easy it was to be led into error by indulging in a captious and cavilling spirit, he instances Hymenæus and Philetus. These men had persuaded themselves, that what was delivered by the preachers of the Gospel, as to the resurrection, did not refer to a state of eternal existence after this life, but to some change wrought in believers here: and in consequence of this opinion, had, it is probable, not only fallen into a damnable heresy, but into great impurity of manners. But, says the Apostle at the close of this account, "the "Lord knoweth them that are his;" and, "In a great house there are not only ves- "sels of gold and silver, but also of wood "and earth; and some to honour, and "some to dishonour." Which we cannot, I conceive, fairly understand in any other than the following sense: that though Hymenæus and Philetus had been admitted into the Church of Christ, and so seemed to be of the number of God's elect people, yet the all-seeing eye of the Omniscient distinguished clearly between them and

the sincere disciples of his Son; He knew they were not his, and He knew precisely who were his, though mixed up in external communion with such men as these.

The doctrine then of God's Election, not only of communities to the outward privileges of the Gospel, but of individuals to a final participation of everlasting happiness, seems to be plainly intimated in these different passages of Scripture. It is perhaps rather intimated than directly asserted; (for the proofs usually adduced in its support out of the writings of St. Paul have in truth little to do with the question;) and the reason may be, that as it relates to an act of God's Sovereign authority, and not to a branch of human duty, a mere intimation was sufficient to elucidate that authority. What it is absolutely necessary for us to believe or to do in order to our salvation is absolutely and plainly commanded; but the indisputable right of the Almighty to dispose of his creatures as to Him might seem best, could bear to be obscurely expressed without a risk of being diminished. Still the intimations of this

doctrine, particularly in the declarations of our Saviour himself, are so strong and striking, as to leave no room to doubt, that if any individual of the human race be saved, he will owe his salvation to the free grace of God, electing him to a happiness to which his best qualifications are not adequate, and bestowing upon him a gift to which his best services do not entitle him.

In the second place we are to inquire what representation is made in Scripture of the character and tendency of this doctrine. And upon a due examination it will appear most evident, that this character and tendency is clearly and distinctly moral; it will appear, that the Election of God is in every instance parallel to moral duty, and coincident with moral integrity. For who are they, who in Scripture are represented as being elected? Are they not those who are most eminently distinguished for religion and virtue? Are they not those, upon whom the most upright Judge among men, had he the bestowing of eternal happiness, would most assuredly confer it? Such are the men,

whom the Scripture represents as being distinguished by the divine favour: the meek and unoffending Abel, the pious Enoch, the upright Noah, the faithful Abraham. These men were certainly elected to enjoy a very eminent share of the divine beneficence, but they were as certainly adorned with a virtue far superior to those who were not so distinguished. Though they did not merit the free grace which was bestowed upon them, yet the record of their actions shows, that they were men of different feelings, different views, and different inclinations from those amongst whom they lived. The sacrifice of Abel was a sacrifice of faith; while his brother's offering was that of one, who owed gratitude indeed, but did not need pardon. The life of Enoch was devoted to the service of God with a steadiness of resolution, that all the seductions of antediluvian debauchery could not shake. Noah certainly owed his preservation from death to his "having found favour in the sight of "God;" but the promptitude with which he received the divine communications,

and acted upon them, showed, that he had upon his mind a deep sense of the power of his Maker, his indefectible truth, and all-perfect justice. The same must be acknowledged of him, who was the father of the faithful. Had the divine mercy not interfered, he would in all human probability have sunk into the idolatry which had nearly overspread the world; his posterity certainly shewed by their subsequent conduct, that they would have been the willing slaves of the most degrading superstition. But when he was called, his ready faith, and no less ready obedience, proved what manner of man he was. In the severest trials he never shrunk from his duty, though by his timidity on one or two occasions it is apparent, that his obedience could not always have been without an effort.

Again, in that general corruption in the kingdom of Israel, who are they, who were distinguished by God's particular care and protection? Who are they, whom He says He had "reserved" to himself? Not those

who had yielded to the prevailing wickedness of the times, but those, who, unknown to the world, but seen and marked by their heavenly Father, had kept themselves untainted by the corruption around them. It was to them, who continued true to their God, that the peculiar care of God's providence was extended. But let us come to the declarations of our Saviour himself. Who are they, whom He pronounces to be the Elect of his Father? Those who obeyed his call to repentance, who believed in Him, not only as the Saviour, but as the authorized Teacher of the world, and were ready to show their love to Him by keeping His commandments: such are they, whom He pronounces Elect. No man who takes his idea of Election from the delineation of it by Jesus Christ, will ever judge it to be consistent with wickedness; he will never conceive it possible, that an impenitent sinner can have reason to hope for acceptance as an elected saint. The Pharisees, who claimed a peculiar relation to God, as the descendants of Abraham,

were pronounced by our Lord "the chil-
"dren of the devil[d]:" why? Because they were hypocrites and liars. The "branches," which "the husbandman takes away," are unfruitful branches; those, which are "purged" that they "may bring forth "more fruit[e]," are such as have brought forth some already. Of whom does He say, that they shall "see God?" Whoever they are, surely they are the Elect. But they are "the pure in heart[f]," men whose honest integrity of principle exerts itself in a life of righteousness and piety. They who are highest in God's favour, are highest also in moral character.

But against this it will be said, that in some instances surely notorious sinners have been apparently preferred to those, who were recommended by at least great external decency of conduct: it was said by our Saviour himself, that "publicans "and sinners would go into the kingdom "of heaven before the Scribes and Pha-"risees[g]." But had the reason why he

[d] John viii. 44. [e] John xv. 2. [f] Matt. v. 8.
[g] Matt. xxi. 31.

said so been observed, this instance would hardly have been adduced to support the notion, that immorality was any recommendation to the favour of God. The publicans and sinners were therefore accepted, because they repented, when a call to repentance was given them: the Pharisees were therefore rejected, because they did not on the same call repent of their hypocrisy. Yet will it be urged that there is one example at least which will be allowed to hold out some hope even to the greatest of sinners, that they may yet be numbered among God's Elect children. St. Paul, it must be acknowledged, was a "chosen vessel[h]," and an eminent "pattern[i]" of the free mercy of the Almighty to the worst of men. He was so: but in stating the case of St. Paul, two great mistakes have been committed. First, because St. Paul is said to be an elect vessel to carry the name and faith of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, it is taken for granted, that he was elected to eternal happiness. I have myself no doubt that he was, but

[h] Acts ix. 15. [i] 1 Tim. i. 16.

the Scripture no where says so; it speaks only of his election as an Apostle. He himself never speaks of his election: on the contrary, to the very moment almost of his being "offered," he speaks of himself as only striving after that which he had not yet attained; and as using every means in his power, that neither the machinations of the Devil, nor the violence of his own passions, might draw him aside from the path of rectitude, and deprive him at last of a share in the happiness of heaven. But there is another very material mistake as to the character of St. Paul. It has been represented as that of "the chief of sinners," and it has been supposed that this representation has been made on St. Paul's own authority. That St. Paul has ever called himself "the chief of sinners[k]" is very questionable: it is rather to be understood that he was the first of sinners, in whom Jesus Christ chose to show a preeminent pattern of his amazing forbearance and mercy. For it is very observable, that

[k] 1 Tim. i. 15. See Ostervald's Causes of the Present Corruption of Christians, P. i. p. 160.

in all other places where St. Paul has occasion to speak of his conduct before his conversion to Christianity, he insists with great boldness upon his integrity; that he had lived in all good conscience before God; and that his manner of life from his youth was such as he had no reason to be ashamed of. He had been indeed a "blas-"phemer and a persecutor;" and it was natural, that when by the grace of God he came to see his errors, he should feel acutely the enormity of his crime: but even at the very time when he is acknowledging that crime, and magnifying the mercy of Christ in forgiving him, he is far from saying that the crime itself was any recommendation to the mercy. The view he takes of his own case is very different. He says he obtained mercy certainly, and no man had a higher feeling of gratitude for that mercy than he; and he censures severely his own obstinacy in persevering to oppose what he now saw to be the truth: but he does not accuse himself of sins which he knew he had not committed, nor does he intimate that his being a sin-

ner was the cause of his obtaining mercy. What he asserts is, that because he did what he did in ignorance, not from cruel or hypocritical motives, but from a sincere though mistaken zeal for God's honour, therefore he obtained mercy. The Apostle's honesty and integrity then, so far from being an obstacle to his call to Christianity, was that which made him a fit object of the Divine favour. Without that favour he would indeed have been lost eternally. His honesty, however unimpeached, would not have saved him, had he continued to persecute the faithful servants of God: but the honesty of his heart and the integrity of his life were so acceptable to Him who searcheth the heart, that He would not let that man perish for want of better light, who, He knew, wanted nothing but light, to serve Him with an upright mind. The example of St. Paul then is so far from being against the coincidence of election and morality, that it greatly confirms and illustrates it.

Another very remarkable instance to the same purpose is that of Cornelius the Cen-

turion. The piety and integrity and the charity of this man are recorded in so prominent a manner, as to afford no room for dispute. His prayers and his alms had come up and been accepted before the throne of God. And on account of these, for so the word of truth is pleased to say[1], an express revelation was made to this good man of the way, in which he should be informed, how effectually to secure the salvation of his soul.

Examples indeed of this kind might be produced in great numbers; but it is sufficient for the illustration of the subject to have dwelt upon the few which have been mentioned; all concurring to assure us, that the best recommendation to the favour of God is piety and integrity of life; and that those alone are likely to be numbered among his Elect, who, either by contrition for past faults, or by a diligent care to avoid faults, show, that they have a due sense of moral obligation, and a deep feeling of the obedience they owe to their Creator. But did we want any further con-

[1] Acts x. 4.

firmation, we should find it in the plain declaration of the text. We are there told of a "Seal," which belongs to that "foundation of God," upon which all hopes of salvation must be built. That Seal has two inscriptions; one asserting God's knowledge and observance of those whom He has pleased to denominate "his;" the other clearly indicating the character that must distinguish all, who would cherish a well-grounded hope that they are of that number. And what is that character? That they should "depart from iniquity;" that they should renounce every thing evil in principle and practice, and consequently, that they should devote themselves to the service of Christ in godliness and virtue. I say consequently, because the active mind of man will necessarily be occupied either well or ill; because it would be absurd to suppose, that the Apostle was recommending that wretched indolence which is the parent of every thing that is bad; and because our Lord has expressly declared, that "every tree that bringeth "not forth good fruit shall be cut down

"and cast into the fire[m]." When therefore the Seal of God's Elect is said to have this inscription, "Let every one that nam-"eth the name of Christ depart from ini-"quity," the meaning is, that he should not only "cease to do evil, but learn to do "well;" that he should not only abstain from vice, but practise virtue.

The coincidence then of God's Election and moral integrity of conduct is, I conceive, conspicuous and decided; and no man has the least shadow of ground to suppose himself an object of the former, who does not in his life prove himself under the influence of the latter. "The foun-"dation of God" indeed "standeth sure;" no violence can shake it, no fraud can undermine it; and upon this foundation the faithful Christian may build a steadfast hope of acceptance with his Maker; but not unless it has the right seal, nor unless that seal has both its inscriptions. As it would be extreme folly to rest our claim to heaven upon a presumptuous estimate of our own merit, so will it little better avail

[m] Matt. vii. 19.

us in a feigned humility to rely upon a fancied election of our persons. Election and obedience are indissolubly united by the will and word of God; and he who endeavours to "put them asunder," endeavours to do that which will inevitably terminate in his own destruction. Whatever raptures of devotion a man may be favoured with, whatever feelings he may experience, however ardent his zeal, and however strong his faith, still if he have not this mark, if he do not "depart from iniquity," he is not one of God's Elect. He has not built upon the "right foundation;" the basis of his house is not "the rock of ages[n]," but "the sand" upon the sea-shore; and when "storms" arise against it, and its stability is to be tried, it will be swept away like the chaff before the wind[o]. He alone can hope to stand without dismay before the tribunal which must assign him his portion for eternity, who acknowledging that he has no reliance upon any thing but the free mercy of God in Christ, yet makes it his endeavour to show that he has not received

[n] Is. xxvi 4. margin. [o] Matt. vii. 26.

the grace of the Gospel in vain, by following its directions, obeying its precepts, and conforming himself in truth and sincerity to all its holy ordinances.

The way then is now clear for taking into consideration the last point which was proposed, the effect namely, which the character of this doctrine given in Scripture may have either in discountenancing or encouraging sound morals and pure religion. That it cannot discountenance them must be evident at once, because we have seen that our Saviour invariably unites God's Election with departure from evil and conversion to holiness. Indeed were we allowed to reason upon this subject, we might naturally conclude from the attributes of God himself, that all, whom He elected, must be endued with piety and virtue; that a God perfectly good and holy could choose for the objects of his peculiar favour those alone, who had some portion at least of that righteousness which was essential to Him. But as it is unnecessary, so it is not altogether safe, to build any thing on our reasoning with respect to

this question. When, however, the Scripture is so express, that "without holiness "no man shall see the Lord;" and when it is said in direct terms, that "nothing un- "clean shall enter into the New Jerusa- "lem," it is impossible to admit that any doctrine delivered in Scripture can have the most distant tendency to encourage any but the purest morals. Be it, that the Elect alone shall ultimately be partakers of the Divine mercy. What then? When we are told by Him, who is ordained to assign every man his portion at the last day, that the "righteous" only shall have a share in the happiness of heaven [p], is it not clear, that the righteous and the elect must be the same persons, and that none can be elect, who are not also righteous? When again we are informed by him who "was "caught up into the third heaven [q]," that "no fornicator or adulterer, no thief or "drunkard, no reviler or extortioner" shall inherit the kingdom of God, but they alone who are "washed, and sanctified, "and justified," not only "in the name of

[p] Matt. xxv. 46. [q] 2 Cor. xii. 4.

"the Lord Jesus," but "by the Spirit of "God[r]," we must be blind, if we do not see, and worse than blind if we do not acknowledge, that a clean heart and pure hands, upright intentions and correspondent actions, are indispensable to those, who look to being accepted by their heavenly Father. If no fornicator and no drunkard, if no reviler and no extortioner can be admitted into heaven, it is clear that neither fornicator nor drunkard, nor reviler nor extortioner, can be among the Elect of God.

Yet it must be confessed that this doctrine has been abused to the support of opinions and practices at once detestable before God and most destructive to man. And what doctrine of the Gospel has not been abused? Even its purity and spirituality have been wickedly wrested to countenance the vilest carnality; and its very charity has been converted into an engine of robbing the honest of their property, to feed the rapacity of the ruffian. Human corruption can pollute the very sanctuary

[r] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

of the Almighty. While "to the pure all "things are pure," and tend to make them yet more pure; to "them that are "defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, "but even their mind and conscience is "defiled[s];" and where the mind and conscience are defiled, they will defile every thing with which they come in contact. Even that faith itself upon which all our hopes depend; that precious "faith" by which alone "the just" themselves "shall "live[t]," even that has been abused, not only to the dishonour of God's Law, but in defiance of the authority of that very Saviour, on whom it affects to be placed. Nothing therefore of this kind should disturb us, nor should it be any prejudice against a Scripture doctrine that it has been mistated and misrepresented. No doctrine of Scripture can really be at variance with the moral law of God, as He has himself revealed it; though the speculations of men, both in regard to this law itself, and to the other truths of Revelation, may often be altogether irreconcileable.

[s] Titus i. 15. [t] Rom. 1. 17.

And thus it has happened in the present case. The Election of God runs parallel with obedience to his Law; but the election of man has deviated widely from that line. It has introduced into this subject the most unhappy errors, and the most perplexing intricacies. But the principal of them, and the causes possibly whence others may have arisen, will be comprehended, I presume, in the consideration of the three following mistakes:

Election has been represented, first, as being irrespective; secondly, as being known to the individuals elected, previous to and independent of their obedience to the precepts of the Gospel; and thirdly, as affording ground to suppose, that grace once conferred will never be withdrawn.

That irrespective Election, that is, Election without regard to the differences of moral character amongst men, is not the doctrine of Scripture, has appeared, I should hope, from the instances already produced. From observing those individuals, who in this world seemed most largely to have shared the favour of God,

and who on that account may be supposed most likely to have been received into his mercy in heaven, we may collect with assurance, that the Almighty, in selecting the objects of his particular regard, had respect to their moral character, to the honesty and integrity of their hearts. If they were distinguished by the peculiar favour of God, they were clearly better qualified than others to be so distinguished. Nor does this in any manner or degree diminish the freedom of God's grace, or put a constraint upon his proceedings. All, it is confessed, were unworthy of his benevolence; all had incurred his displeasure, and were obnoxious to punishment for their sins. None therefore had any right to his favour, none had any claim to his regard; and if that favour were bestowed upon any, it would be bestowed by the free bounty of God. But though all were unworthy, it does not follow that all were equally unworthy; though all were obnoxious to punishment, it does not follow, that the guilt of all was the same either in kind or degree. And yet further: even

where the guilt was equal, and even in cases where one man had committed crimes of a deeper dye and a more atrocious character than another, yet the disposition might be better in one than another; the more guilty might be sooner and more deeply touched with a sense of his criminality, than the one who had sinned less perhaps, but had never repented of his sin. The circumstances of men likewise are so incalculably various, that in all their bearings they can be known only to the eye of the Omniscient. Thus the same sins are not always attended with the same guilt in different men; for they may have been committed under such very different circumstances, as to render one a fit object of rigid justice, and the other of grace and mercy. Even in our confined view the seducer and the seduced are involved in very different degrees of guilt, though both partakers of the same actual crime. But to God all the varieties of character, all the advantages and disadvantages of education, all the difficulties of situation, and all the trials to which men

have been respectively exposed, are completely known, and justly and mercifully weighed. Of the great body of men, thus wholly undeserving of his goodness, He chooses certainly those whom He thinks proper; but He always thinks proper to choose those who, under all circumstances, are the fittest objects of his choice. It might be presumed indeed, that a holy and wise God would do so; and were men as humble as they ought to be, it would be a sufficient proof of the rectitude of the choice, that Almighty God had made it. That rectitude we shall, one day, no doubt, see clearly; and even now, as far as we do see, it is plainly discernible. Good character is neither an obstacle to the favour of our Maker, nor is it overlooked in the bestowing of that favour. Of this, I think, we have an opportunity of judging in two very remarkable instances; I mean, Judas Iscariot and St. Peter. Both sinned grievously; they renounced their Saviour after all the kindness He had shown them, and all the instructions He had given them. But while one was left to perish in his ini-

quity, the other was saved by the gracious extension of the Divine mercy on his behalf. Had that mercy not been extended, there is no doubt that Peter must have perished as well as Judas. Our Saviour tells us, that Satan had desired to have all the Apostles to "sift them like wheat," and that their preservation was owing to his intercession[t]. That intercession alone, it must surely be acknowledged, rescued Peter from sharing in the perdition of Iscariot; but it must be acknowledged also, that there is in the characters of the two men, as delineated in Scripture, a plain and striking difference. The character of Iscariot was that of a close designing hypocrite; one, who steadily kept his eye on his own interest, and pursued it, without either regard to the means by which his object was to be obtained, or any feeling of compunction for the injustice of which he might be guilty; one, who never suffered his passions to get the better of that self-command which was necessary for the accomplishment of his purpose, except per-

[t] Luke xxii. 31, 32.

haps once, when he lost an opportunity of converting to his own use a sum of money, which the piety of Mary had expended on the person of her Redeemer. How different from this was the character of St. Peter! Perfectly honest and straight-forward, free from even the appearance of guile, warmly attached to his Master, and requiring rather to be checked than encouraged in his zeal for his service, he devoted himself to that service without reserve, with an entire purpose of steadfastly adhering to it, and without any self-interested views of avarice or ambition. But the warmth of his temper betrayed him into indiscretion and difficulty; and though his purpose was honest, yet while he at one time pursued it with too much heat, he was liable, from the very constitution of his nature, to fall into an equal depression at another. But the great point of contrast between these two men is this; that though both sinned, and sinned deeply, yet the one sinned coolly and deliberately, and from the influence of a temptation despicably small; the other fell through weak-

ness, and from the fear of a great and imminent danger. The one was a hypocrite, decidedly hardened in vice; the other was honest though weak, upright in his purpose, though unstable in its execution. Here then was surely a great moral difference of character; and though it was undoubtedly not such as could claim even a discharge from punishment at God's hand, yet we see, in point of fact, that the Election did light upon the person whose character was best upon the whole. Though it was an unmerited, it was not an irrespective Election; and, I believe, it will be found, upon a due examination of every other instance as well as this, that the doctrine of irrespective Election has no foundation in the word of God, that it is an invention of man, not a revelation from heaven.

Another source of error on this subject has been the notion, that the individuals elected may know their election previous to and independent of their obedience to the precepts of the Gospel. How this great error came first to be entertained it is difficult to say, but most decidedly there is

no ground for it in Scripture. There is, no doubt, in that Scripture frequent mention of the Elect, of the children of God, of the heirs of salvation; and it is said plainly, that God knows them; but it is nowhere said, that they are known to man. We live in this world by faith and hope, not by knowledge; but if we know precisely beforehand what our condition in the next world will be, then we live by knowledge, and not by faith. Faith and hope may certainly be sometimes weaker, and sometimes stronger, and they may be constantly weaker or stronger in some than others; and according to the state of our faith and hope, our anticipations of future happiness may be either more or less lively: but an actual knowledge of our future lot is inconsistent with the very nature of our present condition. And in point of fact, it does not appear that any one of those, of whom we have the best reason to think that they are now in heaven, was assured of his Election before his actual admission into the abode of just men made perfect. Even St. Paul, whose example

and whose doctrine are so often quoted in support of this opinion, never speaks of himself as sure of his final acceptance, till he could say at the same time, that his dissolution was at hand. Before that, he always represents himself as anxious about his salvation, as labouring to secure it, as watchful lest the wiles of Satan should rob him of his reward. But supposing in this single instance it could be made out, which it cannot, that St. Paul knew himself to be elected to everlasting life, what would this be to us? Would it follow, that because St. Paul, who was the authorized messenger to bear the name of Christ to the Gentiles, who was empowered to prove and support his commission by the most stupendous miracles, who was guided by the Holy Spirit into all necessary truth, and was carried "up to the third heaven, and "there heard unutterable things;" would it follow, that because such a man was favoured with an assurance of salvation, to support him in all his labours, his sufferings, and his difficulties, therefore every ordinary Christian was to expect the same

thing? Not surely in any thing like fairness of reasoning. But after all, what does the declaration of the Apostle amount to, when he was about to leave the world, and looked to the crown of righteousness that was prepared for him? Does he rest his assurance of this crown on his Election? No: but looking back upon his exertions in the cause of the Gospel, upon the fight he had fought, upon the course he had finished, and upon the faith he had kept, he exults, as any good man in his circumstances might exult, at the prospect of that reward, "which the righteous Judge would "give him at the day of retribution,.... "and not to him only, but to all who love "His appearing[u]." What is there here, upon which any man can build a presumptuous assurance of his own final acceptance? Nothing. When he has fought the good fight with St. Paul, when he has finished his course, and at the end of that course can say that he has kept the faith, then indeed his hope may rise into exultation, like St. Paul's, and the Spirit of God

[u] 2 Tim. iv, 6, 7, 8.

will approve it; but his eternal portion must remain to be assigned by that Judge whom the Almighty has appointed.

There is yet another misconception on this subject, upon which a brief examination must be bestowed. An opinion has been grounded upon this doctrine, that grace once given will never be withdrawn, and where Faith has once existed, it can never fail. This opinion is directly contrary to the plain declarations and plain examples of Scripture. True it is, that the faith of the Elect will never fail, and that the grace given to them will ultimately prevail. But who are the Elect? We have seen already, that however they may be known to God, they are not known to man, and that it is inconsistent with the very condition of man here to know his own election. Though therefore the faith of the Elect will not fail, yet as no man can know certainly of himself whether he be elect or not, no man can know certainly whether his faith may not fail[x]. And it is to such a state as this that all the exhortations and admonitions,

[x] See Launcelot Ridley on Ephesians.

all the promises and threatenings of the Gospel are addressed; that is, to the real condition of man in this world, a condition, in which no one can hope to stand firm in faith or obedience, without care, attention, and diligence. Ezekiel tells us plainly, of a "righteous man," who, forsaking his righteousness and dying in iniquity, perished in that iniquity[y]. Our Saviour says, that some, in whom the good seed had been sown, suffered it to be caught away by the devil, some lost it by the fear of persecution, some permitted it to be choked by the cares and the deceitfulness of riches; while they alone retained it, who cherished it so as to bring forth abundant fruit[z]. Yet it was the same seed in all, and sown by the same hand. But St. Paul is most express on this subject, exhorting the Christians of his day to take "example" by the Jews, and not to fall by the same pattern "of unbelief[a]:" and warning them earnestly, that "if after they were made "partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had

[y] Ezekiel xviii. 24. [z] Mark iv. 14—20.
[a] Heb. iv. 11.

" tasted the good word of God, and the " powers of the world to come, they should " fall away, it was impossible to renew " them again by repentance[b]." That they might fall away was therefore, in the Apostle's mind, not an impossible thing; it was a danger against which he thought fit to warn them, and therefore it was a danger to which he thought them exposed.

These errors being thus removed from the doctrine under consideration, the doctrine itself will be found to have nothing in it that can in any degree have an unfavourable effect upon morals and religion; rather, as it is represented in Scripture, it will be seen to tend directly to their support and encouragement. It is to this purpose that our Lord himself and his Apostles apply it. St. Paul tells us to " work " out our salvation with fear and trembling," for this reason, because " God works in us " to will and to do of his good pleasure[c]:" that is, because God by his Spirit puts into our hearts good designs, and gives us strength to execute them, therefore we

[b] Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. [c] Philip. ii. 12, 13.

should exert ourselves with a correspondent energy on our part, lest this Divine favour should have been bestowed upon us in vain. St. Peter exhorts us to "make our "calling and election sure[d];" that is, because we are called and elected, therefore we should be careful so to improve this foretaste of the Divine mercy, so to make use of this talent committed to our charge, as not finally to lose that glory and happiness, to which it was intended to lead. St. Peter here uses the words "calling and election," in the same sense, for that vocation by which those he was addressing became Christians, and his object was to prevail upon them by diligence in the practice of virtue, to take care that this external election might not fail of being ratified by the decision of Christ. But the use to be made of this doctrine, as an encouragement to pure religion and sound morals, is best illustrated by our Saviour himself. The human mind is ever curious to pry into the secrets of futurity, and from this infirmity the first disciples were not exempt. They

[d] 2 Peter i. 10.

therefore asked their Master, what was the number of those who should be saved. That He knew they were convinced; for they had often heard Him talk in a way, which made it evident that eternity was open to his view. But what was his answer? Not such as to gratify their curiosity; not such as to give even themselves an assurance that they were in the number; but an earnest and awakening exhortation, that no care, no pains, no industry should be wanting on their part, to do what was required of them. "*Strive*," says He, "to enter in at the strait gate: "for many, I say unto you, shall *seek* to "enter in, but shall not be able[e]." His answer is at once a reproof to their curiosity, and an awful admonition against security. They had heard Him frequently talk of the Elect, and who so likely to be those Elect as they; and perhaps in this question some little expectation might lurk of a gratifying assurance in their favour. But their Lord thought fit to give their minds another bent, and, instead of a cer-

[e] Luke xiii. 23, 24.

tain promise of personal safety, which might cherish their indolence, to command them, and in them all who should believe by their means, to remember, that the only way to obtain a share in the blessings of the Gospel, the only way to make their calling and election, as inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, sure, was to be eminently diligent, and honestly punctual in the performance of their DUTY.

APPENDIX TO SERM. VIII.

WITH regard to the important doctrine of God's Election, I know nothing, in a small compass, better calculated to teach the young student both to think and speak with a becoming modesty and with all attainable accuracy upon this delicate subject, than the opinion delivered by the learned Bishop Andrews on the Lambeth Articles, and his "Censura Censuræ D. Barreti "de certitudine salutis." I have therefore reprinted both these Tracts, together with a short account of the origin of those Articles, from a copy annexed to a Defence of the Articles of the Church of England by Dr. John Ellis, formerly Rector of Dolgelly, in the county of Merioneth. An account of Barret and the proceedings against him will be found in Heylin's Quinquarticular History, p. iii. c. 20. p. 618. If the young student will take the trouble of carefully comparing the Lambeth Articles with our XVI. and XVII. he will be impressed, I think, with a strong sense of the difference between the soberness of truth and the presumption of error; and will attain

perhaps a more correct idea of the genuine purport of the last controverted article, than he can receive from the laboured expositions of decided partisans on either side.

ARTICULI LAMBETHANI:

ID EST,

I. *Articulorum Lambethæ exhibitorum Historia.*
II. *Articuli de Prædestinatione, et annexis capitibus a D. Whitakero Lambethæ propositi.*
III. *Iidem prout ab Episcopis Theologisque concepti et admissi.*
IV. *Lanceloti Andrews τοῦ πάνυ Wintoniensis Episcopi, de Synodo oblatis Articulis judicium; una cum ejusdem Censura Censuræ D. Barreti, de Certitudine Salutis.*

Articulorum Lambethæ exhibitorum Historia.

In Academia Cantabrigiensi illustria sunt duo munera Theologica; alterum vocatur Regium, Henricum VIII. autorem præferens: alterum a Margareta, matre Henrici VII. institutum, ab ejus nomine appellatur.

Accidit, ut eodem tempore Theologiam docerent, in Regio Whitakerus, et in D. Margaretæ, Petrus Baro. Whitakerus, vir raræ eruditionis (ac proinde magnum allaturus momentum, quocunque se tulisset) diu in Patrum lectione versatus, tandem, seu quia affinitate delapsus erat[a] in familiam Genevensibus magistris addictiorem, sive alia quacunque de causa, totum se istis partibus dedit.

Atque inter alias sententias quæ Calvini et Bezæ authoritate maxime nituntur, urgere cœpit dogma *absolutæ Prædestinationis;* tale scil. quod majorem hominum partem a Christi redemptione et gratia sufficienti ex intentione Dei et Christi penitus excludit. Et quasi parum cruda esset hæc sententia, si in *massæ corruptæ* consideratione consisteret, ipse ad *massam incorruptam*

[a] Prima ejus uxor fuit D. Culverwelli filia, mercatoris Burdigalensis, sed Angli et Londinensis. Secunda fuit D. Fenneri relicta, illius Fenneri qui tam atrociter debacchatus est in Statum Ecclesiasticum Anglicanum et professione Ministerii propterea abiit.

voluit assurgere, Augustinum culpans hoc nomine, quod dixisset; *Prædestinationis caussam quæri et non inveniri: reprobationis vero caussam quæri et inveniri.* Reprobationem vero hanc factam in *massa nondum corrupta* dicebat Whitakerus non esse pure negativam, sed affirmationem includere. Hoc enim esse *decretum* et voluntatem Dei, quo homines tam multi in exitium ruant æternum.

At Petrus Baro, forsan et ante re perpensa, certe istis Whitakeri *paradoxis* incitatus ut in omne hoc argumentum diligentius inquireret, inter opiniones diversissimas, nullam putavit esse probabiliorem ea, quam in Germania Melanchthon, in Dania Hemmingius, in Frisia Snecanus defenderunt: scil. *fidei præscientiam* ordine statuit priorem *Prædestinatione*, quomodo sensisse ac docuisse Patres veteres ante Augustinum, ipsumque adeo Augustinum priusquam cum Pelagio contenderet, testes faciebat ipsos Patres et Bezam id ipsum confitentem.

Prædestinationis controversiam sequebantur aliæ duæ (si tamen duæ dicendæ sint, cum altera alteram post se necessario trahat) 1. de *amissione gratiæ;* 2. de *certitudine ac securitate salutis.* *Amitti* interdum *fidem et gratiam justificantem* statuebat Baro, negante Whitakero. *Certitudinem* ponebat *spei* ille, hic *fidei*, et *absolutam* non *conditionatam.*

Aperuit autem hanc suam sententiam Baro tum præcipue, cum Jonam Prophetam interpretaretur.

Cum Professorum disputatio (ut fit) juventutem diu in partes traxisset, Whitakerus tandem Londinum profectus, Whitgiftum Archiepiscopum Cantuariensem adit: monet concuti Pelagiano dogmate Academiam, et ni mature obviam eatur, apertum dissidium, nec præsentius ullum remedium, quam ut Theses 9. quas ipse conceperat, Antistitum aliquot judicio comprobatæ Cantabrigiam mitterentur.

Ita autem erant conscriptæ Theses, ut prudentiam viri facile agnosceres verborum tenore exquisito, qui posset etiam a non mediocriter dissidentibus, pacis studio approbari, ab ipso autem facillime postea ad suæ sententiæ confirmationem traheretur. Fit conventus

Antistitum, et Theologorum haud magno numero, mense Novembri An. Dom. 1595. et cum in tam perplexo argumento non eadem omnibus placerent, disputatur aliquandiu. Ultimo forte die aberant unus et alter, qui a Whitakeri sententia longissime dissidebant: ita prævaluere alii. Et Whitgiftus, princeps ejus conventus, etsi Whitakeri dogmata minime probabat, facilitate tamen et metu discordiæ, cum suam probare aliis non posset, factus est ipse alienæ sententiæ accessio. Non tamen eisdem verbis probatæ Whitakeri assertiones, quibus ipse proposuit, sed ita mutatæ voces quædam et phrases, ut dissidentis ab ipso judicii magna vestigia appareant.

Transmissæ Cantabrigiam hæ Theses; et Whitakerus victorem se ferens, parta facile sine adversario palma, intimum Reginæ Consiliis et autoritatis in Regno primariæ virum[b], cui et in Academiam peculiaris competebat inspectio, convenit, atque ei, quid in Conventu gestum sit, narrat, ipsasque Theses, ita ut ab Episcopis probatæ erant, ostendit.

At magnus ille vir (qua erat prudentia) facile intelligens, periculosas esse definitiones in controversiis adeo decertatis, vehementer factum hoc omne improbavit; dixitque effecturum ut ejus autores consilii sui pœniteret. Nec fefellit promissi fidem. Reginam quippe convenit, ac gravi oratione demonstrat; in his quæ ad *statum religionis* pertinent, per Angliæ leges neminem posse nisi ex autoritate Reginæ, et quidem accedente Parliamenti consensu, quicquam decernere: neque id frustra institutum. Magnum enim esse in animos humanos regnum *Religionis*, et facillime eo obtentu in partes iri et factiones. At nunc paucos Theologos ausos decreta facere de gravissimis quæstionibus, super quibus multis jam a seculis inter eruditissima ingenia conveniri nunquam potuerit. Neque obscurum quo tenderent qui hoc impetrassent: nam eos ita existimare atque docere, *Quicquid gereretur rerum humanarum, bonum id malumve esset, id omne constringi lege immutabilis decreti; ipsis quoque hominum voluntatibus hanc impositam necessitatem, ut aliter quam vellent homines velle non possent.*

[b] D. Burl. Acad. Cant. Cancell.

Quæ si vera (inquit) sunt, Domina Augustissima, frustra ego aliique fideles *majestatis tuæ* ministri, quid in re quaque opus sit facto, quid ex usu futurum sit et Regni et tuo, suspensa diu consilia versamus, cum de his quæ eveniunt necessario stulta sit plane omnis consultatio. Regina et ipsa commota, Archiepiscopum acciri jubet et (ut erat citra majestatis dispendium festiva) magnas (inquit) te opes congerere audio (Whitgifte) et vis me, ut opinor, divitem facere. Ille quid sibi vellet sermo tam inopinatus non satis intelligens, opes (inquit) sunt non nimis magnæ, sed tamen quantæcunque sunt (Domina) tuas crede. Tu vero (inquit Regina) officiose te loqui existimas, at ego quod offers jam meum esse Regni legibus contendo, incidisti enim in [c] *Præmunire*. Tum de assertionibus Lambethanis disserere incipit. Archiepiscopus jam tandem videns quo Regina tenderet, non hanc (ait) suam Collegarumque mentem fuisse, ut quicquam sine publica authoritate decernerent, aut soli Canones facerent, sed pacis consilium a se Professoribus datum, ne privata certamina in malum publicum erumperent. Aderant Reginæ Consiliarii qui Whitgiftum urgent acriter; in ipso Conventu peccatum, quod inconsulta Regina indictus esset, et paci rectius consuli potuisse, si judicium sibi integrum servassent Antistites. Et quorsum missas Cantabrigiam Assertiones Episcoporum, nisi ut Canonis quandam præferrent speciem. Adeone molestum semel convenire Reginam de negotio tot per dies disceptato? Deinde ad quæstionem de Fato prolabuntur, et dogma (ut ipsis videbatur) bonis moribus, *reique publicæ* adversum graviter exagitant. Exitus hic fuit, ut facti inconsulti veniam precaretur Archiepiscopus, ac promitteret Cantabrigiam se scripturum, ut premerentur Lambethanæ Assertiones, ne qua in publicam notitiam emanarent. Quod et præstitit. Sed multo post (ut videtur) repertum inter Whitakeri schedas, aut alibi, exemplum effecit, ut autoribus invitis hoc opus prorumperet.

[c] Est *Præmunire* lex Angliæ vetus, a Richardo, ut creditur, secundo sancita, quæ vetat ecclesiasticos homines plus sibi authoritatis arrogare, quam regni moribus ipsis debeatur; hac addita pœna, ut qui contra faxit carceri mancipetur, quamdiu principi placeat; bona fisco addicantur.

Post factas has Assertiones Baro et in professione et in sententia mansit; Whitakerus vita ereptus est paucis post Lambethanum Conventum diebus. Baro deinde elapso triennii spatio (nam vetere instituto in illius lectura triennalis est professio) professione abiit, et in privata se studia recondidit.

Post illos duos, inter quos contentio orta erat, professor Regius factus est eruditissimus vir Joannes Overal. Is hanc secutus est dicendi rationem, quæ statuit *Gratiam sufficientem offerri singulis hominibus, et Christum pro singulis mortuum: in omni bono priores esse gratiæ partes, posteriores liberi arbitrii a gratia informata; sed gratiam operari modis inexplicabilibus, non tamen ad actus singulos naturalem in modum determinando: gratiam vero justificantem, cum peccatis capitalibus ante actam pœnitentiam non consistere.*

Ad *Prædestinationis* difficilem admodum controversiam quod attinet, ita sibi temperabat, ut nec priorem, nec posteriorem Augustini sententiam damnaret; quippe quas judicaret ipse non admodum hostiliter inter se dissidere; præsertim cum ipse Augustinus post ortum cum Pelagio certamen scripserit, eadem se tunc credere quæ olim credidisset, cum Manichæos oppugnaret, neque tam sententiam se nunc mutasse, quam loquendi genus.

Quid postea regnante illustriss. Jacobo anno 1603. in Hamptoniensi Curia actum sit, edito ea de re D. Barlovii libello, palam est. Namque ibi D. Reynoldus et qui cum ipso contra Episcopos constitere, inter cætera quæ ad puritatem Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ pertinere vehementer existimabant, et illud postularunt, ut Assertiones Lambethanæ Confessioni insererentur. Minime vero hoc impetrarunt, judicante Rege, ejusmodi definitionibus parum ad pacem profici.

Articuli de Prædestinatione et annexis capitibus a D Whitakero Lambethæ propositi.

I. Deus ab æterno prædestinavit quosdam ad vitam, et quosdam ad mortem reprobavit.

II. Caussa efficiens prædestinationis non est prævisio fidei, aut perseverantiæ, aut bonorum operum, aut ullius rei quæ insit personis prædestinatis, sed sola, absoluta et simplex voluntas Dei.

III. Prædestinatorum præfinitus et certus est numerus, qui nec augeri nec minui potest.

IV. Qui non sunt prædestinati ad salutem, necessario propter peccata condemnabuntur.

V. Vera, viva et justificans fides, et spiritus Dei sanctificans non exstinguitur, non excidit, non evanescit in iis qui semel ejus participes fuerunt, aut totaliter aut finaliter.

VI. Homo vere fidelis, id est, fide justificante præditus, certus est certitudine fidei, de remissione peccatorum suorum et salute sempiterna sua per Christum.

VII. Gratia sufficiens ad salutem non tribuitur, non communicatur, non conceditur universis hominibus, qua servari possint, si velint.

VIII. Nemo potest venire ad Christum nisi datum ei fuerit, et nisi Pater eum traxerit: et omnes homines non trahuntur a Patre ut veniant ad Filium.

IX. Non est positum in arbitrio aut potestate uniuscujusque hominis servari.

Hæ omnes propositiones aut aperte positæ sunt in libro Articulorum, et semper in Ecclesia nostra approbatæ fuerunt; aut ex Articulis necessaria consecutione deduci possunt.

Articuli Lambethæ propositi prout a Cl. V. D. Whitakero in ipsius autographo concepti, Episcopis aliisque Theologis Lambethæ proponebantur.

I.

Deus ab æterno prædestinavit quosdam ad vitam, et quosdam ad mortem reprobavit.

Articuli Lambethæ propositi prout ab Episcopis reliquisque Theologis concepti sunt, et de sensu, quo admissi sunt.

I.

Admissus est hic Articulus totidem verbis. Nam si per primum (*quosdam*) intelligantur *credentes;* per secundum (*quosdam*) *incre-*

duli, lis hic non intenditur: sed est verissimus Articulus.

II.

Caussa efficiens prædestinationis non est prævisio *fidei, aut perseverantiæ, aut bonorum operum, aut ullius rei quæ insit personis prædestinatis, sed sola et absoluta et simplex voluntas Dei.*

II.

Caussa movens aut efficiens prædestinationis ad *vitam* non est *prævisio* fidei aut perseverantiæ, aut bonorum operum, aut alius rei, quæ insit personis prædestinatis; sed sola *voluntas beneplaciti Dei.* Additur in hoc secundo Articulo a Lambethanis 1° *Movens.* 2° *Ad vitam*, 3° mutatur [*sola, absoluta et simplex voluntas Dei*] in [*sola voluntas beneplaciti Dei;*] idque non sine justa ratione. Caussa enim movens prædestinationis ad *vitam*, non est *fides*, sed *meritum Christi*, cum Deus servandis salutem destinavit non propter *fidem*, sed propter Christum. *Moventis* vocabulum proprie *merito* convenit: *meritum* autem est in obedientia Christi, non in fide nostra. Additur [*ad vitam,*] quia licet prædestinationis ad *mortem* caussa sit *prævisio* infidelitatis et impœnitentiæ, adeoque alicujus rei quæ insit personis prædestinatis ad *mortem;* tamen nulla est caussa prædestinationis ad *vitam*, nisi sola *voluntas beneplaciti Dei.* Juxta illud Augustini; *Prædestinationis caussa quæritur et non invenitur; reprobationis vero caussa quæritur et invenitur;* [*absoluta et simplex voluntas Dei*] majus quiddam dicit, quam *sola voluntas beneplaciti.* Nam et *conditionalis* voluntas est *beneplaciti*, et vult Deus nos recte facere, si nos velimus ejus gratiæ non deesse; et placuit Deo servare singulos homines, *si crederent.*

III.

Prædestinatorum præfinitus et certus est numerus, qui nec augeri *nec* minui *potest.*

III.

In hoc Articulo nihil mutatur: verissimus enim est si de præscientia Dei intelligatur quæ nunquam fallitur. Non enim plures vel pauciores servantur quam Deus præsciverit.

IV.

Qui non sunt prædestinati ad salutem, necessario pro-

IV.

In hoc Articulo nihil mutatur; verissimus enim est;

pter peccata condemnabuntur.

quia statuit Deus non remittere peccata *nisi credentibus*. Quod si ita, hanc Thesim et priorem interpreteris, ut et *peccata* et *damnationem* necessitate quadam ex ipsa prædestinatione deducas atque ex ea fluere existimes, aperte Augustino, Prospero, Fulgentio &c. contradicis, et cum Manichæis, *Deum peccati autorem necesse est facias.*

V.

Vera, viva et justificans fides et Spiritus Dei sanctificans non exstinguitur, non excidit, non evanescit, in iis qui semel ejus participes *fuerunt, aut* totaliter *aut* finaliter.

V.

Vera, viva et justificans fides et Spiritus Dei sanctificans non exstinguitur, non excidit, non evanescit, in *electis* aut *totaliter*, aut *finaliter*. In autographo Whitakeri verba erant: [*in iis qui semel ejus participes fuerunt*] pro quibus a Lambethanis substituta sunt [*in electis*] sensu plane alio et ad mentem Augustini; cum illa in autographo sint ad mentem Calvini. Augustinus enim opinatus est, *Veram fidem quæ per dilectionem operatur, per quam contingit adoptio, justificatio et sanctificatio, posse et intercidi et amitti: fidem vero esse commune donum electis et reprobis, sed perseverantiam electis propriam.* Calvinus autem, *Veram et justificantem fidem solis salvandis et electis contingere.* Et Cl. V. D. Overal defendit et in Academia et in Conventu Hamptoniensi *justificatum, si incidat in graviora peccata, antequam pœnitentiam agat, in statu esse damnationis:* ibique contraria sententia quæ statuit, *justificatum, etiamsi in peccata graviora incidat, justificatum tamen manere,* a Regia Majestate damnata est: ita in hoc articulo nihil minus quam Whitakeri *sententia* probata est.

VI.

Homo vere fidelis, id est, fide justificante *præditus, certus est,* certitudine fidei, *de* remissione *peccatorum suorum et salute sempiterna sua per Christum.*

VI.

Homo vere fidelis, *id est, fide justificante* præditus, certus est *plerophoria fidei* de *remissione* peccatorum suorum et salute sempiterna sua per Christum. Nihil hic mutatur, nisi quod

pro [*certitudine*] substituitur *vox Græca* [*plerophoria.*] Quidam autem ex theologis voluerunt, pro *fidei plerophoria,* reponi *spei plerophoriam:* verum eorum absentia cum transigeretur negotium, effecit ut maneret vox *fidei* quam scripserat Whitakerus. Voce autem *plerophoriæ* usi sunt, quia non designat *plenam* et *absolutam certitudinem,* qualis est *scientiæ vel principiorum fidei,* (cum fides sit talium rerum, quarum non est evidentia vel certa scientia) sed minorem quendam certitudinis gradum, quippe cum etiam in *judiciariis* et *forensibus probationibus* usurpetur.

Verissimus est hic articulus, si de *certitudine præsentis status* intelligatur; aut etiam *futuri,* sed *conditionata.* Credit enim fidelis *se credere,* et credit *credentem servatum iri;* credit etiam perseveraturum se; sed non *una* omnino et *eadem certitudine:* quia *certitudo* hæc *partim* nititur Dei promissionibus, qui nos tentari ultra vires non patitur; *partim* pii propositi sinceritate, qua pro tempore futuro nos Deo obedientiam præstituros sancte in nos recipimus.

Alioqui si hic sensus affingitur assertioni; hominem *certitudine* eadem, qua Christum credit *mortuum* et esse *mundi Salvatorem,* credere debere, *se esse servandum,* sive *Electum,* repugnaret hæc assertio Confessioni Regis Edvardi, in qua legitur; *Decretum prædestinationis incognitum est:* et Augustino; *Prædestinatio apud nos, dum in præsentis vitæ periculis versamur, incerta est.* De Civit. Dei, lib. ii. cap. 12. et alibi; *Justi, licet de suæ perseverantiæ præmio certi sint, tamen de ipsa perseverantia reperiuntur incerti.*

VII.	VII.
Gratia sufficiens ad salutem *non tribuitur, non communicatur, non conceditur universis hominibus, qua servari possint, si velint.*	Gratia *salutaris* non tribuitur, non communicatur, non conceditur universis hominibus, qua servari possint, si velint. Pro [*gratia sufficienti ad salutem*] quod erat in Whitakeri autographo, substituerunt Lambethani [*gratiam salutarem*] ut plane appareat loqui eos de ea gratia, quæ est *actu ultimo salutaris* sive *actu efficax,* seu quæ *per se* (non addita nova gratia) salutem

operatur. Hæc quidem non conceditur, sed ne offertur universis, cum sint plurimi (utpote Pagani &c.) quibus Evangelium nec interna nec externa voce prædicetur. Ergo illa verba [*qua servari possint si velint*] intelligenda sunt de *potentia proxima et immediata.* Nam si de *potentia remotiore* intellexissent, frustra induxissent vocem *gratiæ sufficientis,* quæ *sufficiens* appellari solet, non quod sit *efficax,* vel *per se actu* operetur salutem, sed quod sufficiens sit ad salutem ducere, modo homo non ponat obicem. Et hæc Augustini et Prosperi fuit sententia, qui *gratiam saltem parciorem, occultioremque omnibus datam* aiunt, et talem quidem quæ ad *remedium* sufficeret. Unde Fulgentius; *Quod non adjuvantur quidam a gratia Dei, in ipsis caussa est, non a Deo.*

VIII.

Nemo potest venire ad Christum nisi datum ei fuerit, et nisi Pater eum traxerit: et omnes homines non trahuntur a Patre ut veniant ad Filium.

VIII.

In hoc Articulo nihil mutatum: non omnes trahuntur *tractu ultimo.* Sed qui negat omnes trahi *tractu remotiore* tollit *opitulationem* illam *generalem,* sive *commune auxilium* quo omnium hominum corda pulsari dicit Prosper. Tractum autem Theologi Lambethani non intellexerunt (cum Whitakero) *determinationem physicam irresistibilem:* sed *divinam* operationem (prout communiter in conversione hominis operatur) quæ naturam voluntatis liberam non tollit, sed ad bonum spirituale idoneam primo facit, deinde et ipsam bonam facit.

IX.

Non est positum in arbitrio *aut potestate uniuscujusque hominis servari.*

IX.

In hoc quoque nihil mutatum: verissimum enim est, salutem nostram esse *primario* non in nobis, sed a gratia *præveniente, excitante, concomitante,* et *subsequente* in omni opere bono; *secundario* ab *arbitrio* et voluntate hominis *consentiente* atque *acceptante.* Nulla potestas est *arbitrii* ad bonum *spirituale,* nisi gratia non modo tollat impedimenta, sed et vires suppeditet. Non est ergo positum in *arbitrio primitus et potissimum;* imo *nullo modo in arbitrio* est positum, ut homo quilibet quo-

libet momento ad salutem possit pervenire. At vero esse aliquam aliquando in *arbitrio* potestatem *gratiæ subordinatam* et *gratiæ consentientem*, nemo inficias iverit, qui Augustinum audiverit: *Dum tempus est*, (inquit) *dum in nostra potestate est opera bona facere:* et alibi, de pœnis *inferni* loquens; *Majus est* (inquit) *quod timere debes, et in potestate habes ne eveniat tibi.*

Reverendissimi τοῦ πάνυ doctissimique Patris Lanceloti Wintoniensis (qui ipse ejusdem pars magna fuit) de Synodo oblatis a D. Whitakero Articulis Judicium.

Quatuor priores Articuli de Prædestinatione sunt et Reprobatione: quarum illa ab Apostolo dicitur Ὦ βάθος! hæc a Propheta, *Abyssus multa.* Rom. xi. 33. Psal. xxxvi. 6.

Ego certe (ingenue fateor) sequutus sum Augustini consilium: *mysteria* hæc quæ aperire non possum, clausa miratus sum, et proinde, per hos 16 annos, ex quo Presbyter sum factus, me neque publice neque privatim vel disputasse de eis, vel pro Concione tractasse. Etiam nunc quoque malle de eis audire, quam dicere. Et quidem cum *lubricus* locus sit, et habeat utrinque periculosa *præcipitia,* cumque loci Paulini (unde fere eruitur) inter δυσνόητα illa (de quibus Petrus) semper sint habiti: cumque nec multi in Clero sint, qui ea *dextre* expedire, et perpauci in populo qui idonei illius auditores esse possint; suaderem, si fieri possit, ut indiceretur utrinque silentium; nec ita passim et *crude* proponerentur a quibusque ut assolet. Certe multo magis expedire arbitror, ut doceatur populus noster salutem suam quærere in *manifestis* vitæ sanctæ et fideliter institutæ (quod et Petrus suadet) quam in *occultis* consilii *divini:* cujus curiosa nimis inspectio *vertigines* et *scotomata* generare potest et solet; ædificationem certe in *angustis* ingeniis vix solet. Sed tamen rogatus *sententiam* meam de his Articulis, idque a Dominatione Tua cui non parere Religio fuit, sic paucis respondeo.

Ad 1. *quo asseritur Prædestinatio.*

Esse apud Deum in æterna illa sua (sive *præscientia* dicere libeat, sive) *scientia*, qua videt quæ non sunt tanquam ea quæ sunt, *prædestinatos* quosdam, quosdam *reprobos*, extra *controversiam* esse arbitror. Scripturæ verba sunt, πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, *id est*, ab æterno scilicet elegisse Deum nos; et cum elegisset prædestinasse, Eph. i. 4, 5. Elegisse autem ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, *de mundo*, Joan. xv. 19. Quare non omnes in mundo elegisse, sed *quosdam*, alioqui enim *Electio* non foret. Quos vero non elegit et eligendo approbavit (ut *electionis* natura fert) reprobasse. Et Scriptura verbis utitur ἀπώθειν, *rejiciendi*, Rom. xi. 2. ἀποδοκιμάζειν, *reprobandi*, Heb. xii. 15.

Tantum ne utrobique par ratio videatur, et eadem prædestinandi ratio, eadem reprobandi; si hoc plene non constet, cuperem addi; *Aliter prædestinatos illos*, nempe *per Christum*, Eph. i. 5. *Aliter hos reprobatos*, nempe *propter peccatum.*

Ad 2. *quo Prædestinationis Caussa explicatur.*

Verissimum Dei per Prophetam verbum est: *Tantummodo in me auxilium tuum: id est*, nec a quoquam auxilium nisi a me, nec a me quicquam nisi auxilium: verissimum et Apostoli; *Quis discernit? id est*, a Deo solo habere nos quo a reliquis discernimur.

Sed tamen de particula illa [*sola voluntas beneplaciti*] quæri potest,

Primo includatne Christum, an secludat: *id est*, sitne actus prædestinandi actus *absolutus*, an *relatus?*

Quod ad me, existimo *relatum* esse: nec ullam esse Dei εὐδοκίαν ἐν ἀνθρώποις, *id est*, voluntatem, qua *beneplacitum* sit ei in hominibus, nisi in *filio* in quo εὐδόκησε, nec vel *ante* vel *sine intuitu Christi* prædestinari quenquam. Sed (ut habent sacræ Scripturæ) Christum primo προεγνωσμένον *præscitum*, 1 Pet. i. 2. deinde *in eo nos*, Rom. viii. 29. Christum primo ὁρισθέντα *prædestinatum*, Rom. i. 4. deinde *per eum nos*, Eph. i. 5. Non autem *priore* loco *nos*, (uti nonnullis videtur) *posteriore illum*, et *propter nos*. Neque enim prædestinari posse nos εἰς υἱοθεσίαν, *ad adoptionem filiorum*, nisi in *filio naturali;* neque prædestinari nos posse, ut conformes simus imagini filii, nisi filius primo statuatur, cujus imagini conformemur.

Quare et huic quoque Articulo cuperem addi *beneplacitum Dei in Christo.*

Deinde quæri potest secundo; includatne *præscientiam* Dei voluntas hæc sola *beneplaciti*, an excludat? Ego certe nullo modo existimo divellenda hæc, nempe *præscire et prædestinare*, sed (quod Apostoli faciunt) conjungenda. Neque hic vero audeo præcipitare sententiam meam, aut damnare Patres, qui fere omnes secundum *prævisam fidem*, et eligi et prædestinari nos asserunt. Id quod vel Beza ipse fatetur in xi. ad Rom. 2. edit. 2ª. *Patres hic nullo modo audiendi, qui ad prævisionem hoc referunt.* In quo tamen (ut mihi videri solet) potius de *serie* et *ordine*, quo utitur Deus in actu prædestinandi, loquuntur, quam de *caussa* prædestinationis. Quam seriem alii aliter, ad suum quisque captum, solent texere: Patres in ea mihi sententia videntur fuisse; *Electionem nullam fore nisi ita texatur; Deum primo diligere Christum, dein nos in Christo;* quod Apostolus dicit; *Gratificare nos in dilecto;* (Eph. i. 6.) 2° *gratificatos sic, gratia donare et fide.* 3° *sic donatos atque ita a reliquis discretos eligere.* 4° *Electos prædestinare.*

Certe *Electionis* hoc natura postulat, quæ nulla omnino existente differentia inter eum qui eligitur et eum qui rejicitur, nec esse nec cogitari potest: sic Œcumenius ex Græcorum sententia, p. 323. Εἰπὼν κατὰ ἐκλογήν, ἔδειξεν ὅτι καὶ διέφερον ἀλλήλων: οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἐκλέγεται ἕτερον ἀπ' ἑτέρου εἰ μή τι αὐτοῦ διαλλάσσοι. Sic Augustinus ad Simpl. i. 2. *Non tamen Electio præcedit justificationem* (scil. prævisam,) *sed Electionem justificatio. Nemo enim eligitur nisi jam distans ab illo qui rejicitur: unde quod dictum est, Quia elegit nos Deus ante mundi constitutionem, non video quomodo sit dicendum nisi præscientia.*

Neque secus Scholastici: Thom. Prima Q. 23. Art. 4. *Prædestinatio præsupponit Electionem, et Electio dilectionem.* Nempe primo fecit eligendos, dein elegit, dilexit ut daret; elegit quæ dedit. Nec alia mihi mens videtur reverendissimi Eboracensis; sic enim ille. *Quid in Jacobo dilexit Deus ab æterno, cum nihil boni fecisset? certe quod suum, quod ipse erat illi daturus.*

Certe Apostolus ipse non veretur in negotio hoc conjungere ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν et δοθεῖσαν χάριν; atque hoc πρὸ

χρόνων αἰωνίων; cum sc. δοθεῖσα illa χάρις non nisi in *præscientia* esse potuit, cum *æterno* scilicet *proposito Dei*, ipsam quoque gratiam quam se daturum prævidit ante tempora *secularia*.

Neque incommodum inde ullum, (ut mihi videtur) si Deus ut *coronat* in nobis *dona sua*, sic *eligat* in nobis *dona sua;* nempe quæ primo diligendo dedit, quo post sic data eligeret. Atque ita cum *dilectio*, quæ est *actus gratiæ*, qua Deus discernit, tum *Electio*, quæ est actus *judicii*, qua sic discretos seligit, utraque conservantur. Atque hoc modo manebit *Electio*.

Recentiorum enim *series illa* omnem plane *Electionem* tollit; qua Deus ponitur homines nec in ulla *massa* existentes, nec ullo modo per sua dona discretos, *primo actu* et *eo absoluto*, *simul* et *semel*, hos quidem addicere saluti, illos vero perditioni sempiternæ: post quam addictionem, quis *Electioni* locus esse possit non intelligo, aut quomodo illa ipsa addictio Electio dici possit.

Sed hæc tota quæstio (uti dixi) de *ordine* potius est, quo procedit Deus ad captum nostrum, qui ex parte cognoscimus, quam de *caussa* quoad *actum* ipsum, qui *unus* est in Deo et *simplicissimus;* vel si de *caussa*, non de *primi actus caussa* intelligi debet, sed de *caussa quoad integrum effectum* (ut loquuntur) *in prædestinando*.

Quæritur sit ne *actus integralis* (conceptu nostro) ex variis *actibus* constans, an *primus* ille *solus?* Et si plures et varii, quis *ordo*, quæ *series actuum?*

Prædestinatio *quæ sine* præscientia *non potest esse, non est nisi bonorum operum*. Aug. de Prædest. Sanctorum cap. 10. *Electi sunt ante mundi constitutionem, ea prædestinatione in qua Deus sua futura facta præscivit*. Idem ibid. cap. 17.

An quisquam dicere audebit Deum non præscisse, quibus esset daturus ut crederent? De bono perseverantiæ 14.

Ista igitur sua dona quibuscunque Deus donat, procul dubio donaturum se esse præscivit, et in sua præscientia præparavit, cap. 17.

Si nulla est prædestinatio quam defendimus, non præsciuntur a Deo; præsciuntur autem, fol. 23.

Hæc igitur (dona) *quæ poscit a Domino, et semper ex quo esse cœpit Ecclesia poscit, ista Deus vocatis suis da-*

turum se esse præscivit, ut in ipsa prædestinatione jam dederit. ib.

Ad 3. *de Numero certo.*

Sunt ipsa Augustini verba initio cap. 3. de Cor. et gra. *Eorum qui prædestinati sunt, ita certus est numerus, ut nec addatur iis quisquam, nec minuatur.*

Et Ambrosius de voc. lib. ii. cap. ult. *De plenitudine membrorum corporis Christi præscientia Dei, quæ falli non potest, nihil prodidit; et nullo detrimento minui potest summa prœcognita atque in Christo ante secula æterna prœelecta: certissimum enim est, scientiam divinam certissimam esse, nec falli posse: novisse autem Dominum qui sunt ejus.*

Ad 4.

Qui non est inventus scriptus in libro vitæ (i. e. prædestinatus) *missus est in lacum ignis,* Apoc. xx. ver. ult. *id est,* damnatus est. Damnatus autem proculdubio propter peccata sua. Quis enim hoc negabit?

Atque id *necessario* (si sic loqui placeat;) sed *necessitate ex hypothesi,* non *absoluta.* Id est (ut Articulus ipse se explicat,) propter peccata, ideoque quia peccarunt. Non autem ideo quia non sunt prædestinati.

Quanquam ego (quod et Patres et Scholastici sedulo faciunt) terminis his [*necessitatis*] et [*necessario*] abstinendum censerem; et pro iis [*certo*] vel [*sine dubio*] substituenda: vitandas enim, quoad ejus fieri potest, καινοφωνίας.

Ad 5. *de Amissione Fidei et Spiritus.*

Certe nemo unquam dixerit (credo) *Fidem in Electis finaliter excidere.* Illa vero non excidit. Sed *quod non excidat* hoc habere existimo a *natura subjecti sui,* non *sua;* ex *privilegio personæ,* non *rei.* Atque hoc propter Apostatas, quibus vitio dari non debet, quod excidant a *fide* quæ *vera* et *viva* nunquam fuit.

An vero Spiritus Sanctus ad tempus *auferri* aut *extingui* possit, existimo quæri adhuc posse; fateor hærere me.

De Fide.

Tu stas fide, noli altum sapere, sed time: alioquin excideris et tu; quomodo non *irrisorium præceptum,* si non possit excidere?

1. *Cavete ne errore abducti excidatis propria firmitate*, &c.

2. *Videte ne quis deficiat a gratia Dei. Excidistis gratia, qui in lege.* Gal. v. 4.

3. *Spiritum Sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.* Psal. li. 13.

4. *Spiritum nolite extinguere;* quomodo non *irrisoriæ* præceptiones et orationes hæ si nullo modo *excidere* a firmitate *fidei*, aut *deficere a gratia* possimus, si nullo modo *Spiritus auferri* aut *extingui* posset?

Etsi non sum nescius et hoc ipsum [*Non posse amitti totaliter*] exponi posse sic, ut *in totum prorsus* vel *penitus* amitti nequeat etsi *tota* amittatur; id est, ita amitti, ut non sit locus revertendi unde exciderunt.

Ad 6. de Certitudine Salutis.

Existimo qua *certitudine* certus quis est, se vere *fidelem* esse, aut se *fide justificante* præditum, eadem certum esse de salute sua per Christum. Puto autem eam potius esse πληροφορίαν *spei:* (de qua ad Heb. vi. 11.) quam *fidei:* et (si una voce exprimendum sit) πεποίθησιν potius quam πίστιν. Non enim *eandem certitudinem* haberi posse de eis *enuntiatis*, quæ *conditionem* in se continent, quam nos præstare oportet ut veræ sint, ut [*qui credit invocat*] vel, [*si credas invoces,*] quam de iis quæ non sunt *conditionatæ*, sed mere *categoricæ*, ut [*Deus est omnipotens*] sed *minorem;* quæ tamen non hæsitet, sed assensum suum ad alteram partem *contradictionis* determinet.

Ad 7. de Collatione Gratiæ.

Gratiam *salutarem* non existimo *conferri* omnibus; sed *offerri* tamen omnibus, hoc ipso quod *præviæ* quædam ad eam *dispositiones* non solum *offerantur*, sed etiam *conferantur* omnibus; quibus illi nisi deessent, ipsa quoque *salutaris gratia* illis conferretur. *Tribui, communicari, concedi*, si *relativæ* voces sunt, et *acceptionem* implicent, verum est: sed si *relationem* non includant, sed ex parte Dei offerri; vel Deum paratum esse vel præsto ut concedat ac communicet; sic (existimo) omnibus tribui.

Offerri itaque et præsto esse Deum ut *conferatur;* per homines autem ipsos stare, quod oblata non conferatur. Non enim *gratiam nobis*, sed *nos illi* deesse.

August. de Gen. contra Manich. l. 3. Istud lumen

non irrationabilium animalium oculos pascit; sed pura corda eorum qui Deo credunt, et ab amore visibilium rerum et temporalium, se ad ejus præcepta servanda convertunt. Quod omnes homines possunt si velint, quia illud lumen omnium hominum, &c.

Ad 8.

Vere dicitur, *Neminem venire ad Filium, nisi trahatur:* et *omnes non trahi ut veniant ad Filium,* id est, *ita trahi ut veniant:* sed et illud addendum: *quod vel non trahantur omnes, vel non sic trahantur, causam esse dissolutam ipsorum hominum voluntatem, non absolutam voluntatem Dei.*

Ad 9.

Non est positum aut in *libero arbitrio* cujusquam, nisi per *Filium liberato;* aut in potestate ullius, nisi data illi desuper, servari.

Materia hujus litis futura est, quisque ut affectus est, utque animum habet, voculam aliquam pertrahet ad opinionem suam; si desit, supplebit de sensu suo. Ego, quod ab initio suasi, etiamnum suadeo, fidele utrinque silentium.

Atque hæc de *Prædestinatione* et *Reprobatione.* Sed ita tamen, ut *sententiam* et hac in re et de ipsis Articulis meque ipsum per omnia *Gr. Pr. Censuræ* submissum velim.

Censura Censuræ D. Barreti de Certitudine Salutis.

Neminem tanta firmitate suffultum, &c. *ut de salute sua debeat esse securus.* Ita D. Barret: Jubetur retractare sic; *fide justificatos* &c. *debere de salute sua certos esse et securos.*

1. *Certos* non debuit addi: non enim negaverat ille, nec quisquam (credo) sani cerebri. Sane retractare non debuit quod non asseruit, nec verbum interponi cujus in Articulo nulla mentio.

2. *Securum esse debere quemquam de salute* minus commode dictum. Certe verba illa *concionatoris* censuram effugere poterant: leviter enim immutata, verba sunt Leonis, sic enim ille; (dicente namque Paulo:

Qui stat, videat ne cadat:) *nemo est tanta firmitate suffultus ut de stabilitate sua debeat esse securus.* Ser. 5. de Quadr. Sane parcendum fuerat, si non illi, saltem Leoni.

1. Sententiam vero cur minus probem faciunt hæc: locus in Censura citatus nihil ad rem. Nempe *debere justificatos securos esse.* Locus est, Rom. v. 1. *Fide justificati pacem habemus erga Deum:* certe: *pacato* igitur *animo* licet esse nobis, at non *securo;* quippe nec pax ipsa secura est. Nam et nobis *prima* cura incumbit, pax hæc ut vera sit: *Multi enim sanant contritionem filiæ meæ dicentes, pax, pax, et non est pax, dicit Deus,* Jer. vi. 14. et Ezek. xiii. 10. Deinde si vera sit, *secunda* cura incumbit, ne per violatas a nobis conditiones pacis, auferatur a nobis denuo, Deo ipso dicente, (Jer. xvi. 15.) *Abstuli pacem meam a populo isto, nempe misericordiam meam,* &c.

Atque ut securis nobis esse non licet, quia pacem habemus; ita neque quia stamus in gratia, sive per fidem. Stanti enim in gratia curandum quod dicit Apostolus, Heb. xii. 15. *Videte ne quis vestrûm deficiat a gratia Dei.*

Stanti autem per fidem, curandum quod idem dicit, Rom. xi. 20. *Tu fide,* sive *per fidem stas: noli altum sapere, sed time.* Et quod alibi, 1 Cor. x. 16. *Qui stare se putat, videat ne cadat.* Quæ verba Apostoli ab Augustino et Bernardo usurpantur contra securitatem. *Aug. de bono persever. cap.* 8. *Bern. Ser.* 1. *de Septuages.*

2. Sacræ literæ nusquam *securitatem* suadent, quin potius eam vocem malam in partem accipiunt: quasi enim ab ea abstinendum sit, notantur ab Apostolo, qui eam usurpant; *Cum dicent homines, pax et securitas, superveniet iis repentinus interitus,* 1 Thes. v. 3. Quare tanquam mali ominis declinandam censeo.

3. Neque vocis ratio magis favet. *Securus* enim excludit *curam* et non hæsitationem tantum. Revera enim *curæ* opponitur *securitas.* Atqui jubemur a Spiritu Sancto omnem curam subinferre; et cupere se dicit Apostolus (Heb. vi. 11.) ut unusquisque nostrûm eandem solicitudinem ad finem usque ostendat.

4. Rei vero ipsi (nempe *securitati*) repugnare videtur

conditio tum vitæ Christianæ, quæ *militia* est; tum vitæ humanæ, quæ *tentatio* est super terram: quarum neutra *securitatem* fert, quin perpetuam potius curam et solicitudinem, tum orandi, ne in tentationem inducamur, tum considerandi nos ipsos ne et nos tentemur: idque etiam iis qui *spirituales* sunt, Gal. vi. 1.

5. Perpetuæ illæ Christi et Apostolorum voces, *vigilate, attendite, cavete, tentate vos, probate vos*, &c. excutiendæ *securitati* sunt omnes, non ingenerandæ. Quid enim aliud sonant voces hæ, quam ne sitis *securi?* Nec voces modo, sed etiam sententiæ. Paulus: *Cum timore et tremore operamini salutem vestram*, 2 Phil. 14. Petrus; *In timore incolatus vestri tempore conversamini*, 1 Pet. i. 17. Joannes; *Tene quod habes, ne alius accipiat coronam tuam*, Apoc. iii. 20. Quæ omnes id agunt ut cum fide retineatur et timor, ne *certitudo* degeneret in *securitatem*.

Certe D. Petrus cum jubet, *Satagite ut certam reddatis Electionem vestram*, ut nos eniti vult ad certitudinem, ita statuere videtur satagere quemque rerum suarum ut eo tandem perveniat: quasi is summus sit gradus in vita hac, et satis sit, imo præclare nobiscum actum sit, si eo aspirare liceat.

7. Neque verò quoad certitudinis gradum plane æquandus videtur præsentis vitæ status cum statu futuræ, sed distinctio aliqua retinenda, cum ultra *securitatem* nihil sit. Quare sit hoc ipsum [*securitate frui*] peculiare iis qui defuncti jam sunt, et ἐπινίκιον illud Apostoli cantarunt; *Absorpta est mors in victoriam*. Nos vero hic in terris militantes, contenti certitudine, cedamus gradu hoc summo *securitatis*, et relinquamus eum Ecclesiæ in cœlis *triumphanti*, quæ sola *secura* est.

8. Male autem semper successit iis qui ita se *certos* autumabant ut etiam *securi* fuerint; Davidi suum *non movebor*, Psal. xxx. 6. Petro suum *etsi omnes, non ego*. Melius multo iis, qui ita *certi* ut tamen *soliciti*. Jobo: *Scio quod Redemptor meus vivit*, &c. cap. xix. 25. Et, *Hæc mihi spes reposita est in sinu meo:* et, *tamen verebar omnia opera mea*, c. ix. 28. Paulo; *Certus sum quod neque mors*, &c. Rom. viii. 38. Et, *Tamen castigo corpus meum, ne quo modo cum aliis prædicavero, ipse reprobus efficiar*, 1 Cor. ix. 27.

9. Tametsi quod affertur de *carnali* et *spirituali securitate*, frigidum plane sit, cum pari ratione, et de præsumptione, et de superbia loqui liceat; nempe per κατάχρησιν *abusive* scilicet; tamen etiamsi sic mollire liceat, etiam atque etiam videndum est, quid seculi nostri et populi indoles postulet ista de re doceri; et an expediat, his præsertim moribus atque his temporibus, frigescenti hominum curæ atque conatui bene operandi, per istiusmodi Theses frigidam suffundere, et quasi *certitudo* parum sit, *securitatem* inculcare: cum (ut recte Gregorius) *Securitas sit mater negligentiæ;* cumque non solum ex trepidatione nimia (ut in Caino) sed sæpe etiam (ut in Saulo) ex nimia spe desperatio.

10. Ultimo, a recepto in Ecclesia loquendi genere, non censeo recedendum; qui fere (cum Leone supra citato) sentiunt; *Non posse nos nec debere de salute securos esse.*

Augustinus, Concil. x. c. 32. *Et nemo securus esse debet, in ista vita, quæ tota tentatio nominatur, ut qui fieri potuerit ex deteriore melior, non fiat etiam ex meliore deterior.*

De bono persev. c. 8. *Deus autem melius judicavit miscere quosdam non perseveraturos certo numero sanctorum suorum, ut quibus non expedit in hujus vitæ tentatione securitas, non possint esse securi.*

Ibid. c. 22. *Quoniam de vita æterna, quam filiis promissionis promisit non mendax Deus ante tempora æterna, nemo potest esse securus, nisi cum consummata fuerit ista vita, quæ tentatio est super terram; sed faciet nos perseverare in se usque in ejus vitæ finem, cui quotidie dicimus; ne nos inferas in tentationem.* Sic concionari docet Augustinus.

Ep. 12. ad Prob. *Unde mirum videri potest, cum sis secundum hoc seculum, nobilis, dives, tantæ familiæ mater, et ideo licet vidua, non tamen desolata, quomodo occupaverit cor tuum præcipueque vendicaverit orandi cura. Nisi quia prudenter intelligis, quod in hoc mundo et in hac vita nulla anima possit esse secura.* Et paulo post; *Nam etsi sibi quisque, nemo alteri notus est; tamen nec sibi quisque ita notus est, ut sit de sua crastina conversatione securus.*

Chrysostomus, in verba: *Si quomodo apprehendam: dixi me in ipsum credidisse et potentiam resurrectionis ejus, et consortem passionum ejus factum esse, et conformatum morti ejus, veruntamen post ista omnia nondum securus sum.* Et paulo post Hom. 7. in Ep. ad Philip. *Si ergo qui tanta passus est, si qui persecutionem tulit, si qui mortificationem habebat nondum securus fuit, quid dicemus nos?*

Ambrosius in Psal. 37. *Nisi forte sic intelligamus; quod etsi innocens quisque sit, tamen securus esse non possit, cui sunt adversus gravissimos hostes quotidiana certamina.*

Hilarius in Psal. 137. *Nullum diem justus quisque sine metu transigit: neque anxia semper erga se fides securi temporis otium recipit; scit enim omnes dies insidiarum sibi plenos,* &c.

Gregorius Epist. 186. ad Gregoriam. *Inutilem rem postulasti, quia secura de peccatis fieri non debes, nisi cum jam in die vitæ tuæ ultimo plangere eadem peccata minime valebis.*

Bernardus Epist. 107. ad Thom. Beverl: *De qua tamen percepta jam suimet ex parte notitia, interim glorietur quidem in spe, nondum tamen in securitate.* Bernardo enim securitas in excessu est, et opponitur timori in defectu. *Vide Ser. in Cantic.* 11.

Fideles de Prædestinatione perseverantiaque sua incertos esse per omnem vitam, probat Augustinus.

In de corrupt. et gratia, cap. 13. initio fere.

Contra Articulos sibi falso impositos Artic. 12.

In Epistola 107.

In de bono perseverantiæ cap. 13. haud longe ab initio.

In de civitate Dei, lib. 11. c. 12.

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